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ANSWERS

FOR

WILLIAM WISHART,

Principal of the College of *Edinburgh*,

TO THE

CHARGE exhibited against him before the
Rev. Synod of *Lothian and Tweeddale*,

BY THE

Reverend Messieurs *George Logan*, *Neil M'Vicar*,
James Walker, *John Walker*, and *George Lind-*
say, of Articles of Error alledged to be con-
tained in two Sermons preached by him.

To which are subjoyned

Some *NOTES* at the Bottom of some Pages, to ob-
viate some *Remarks* that have been made on these
ANSWERS.



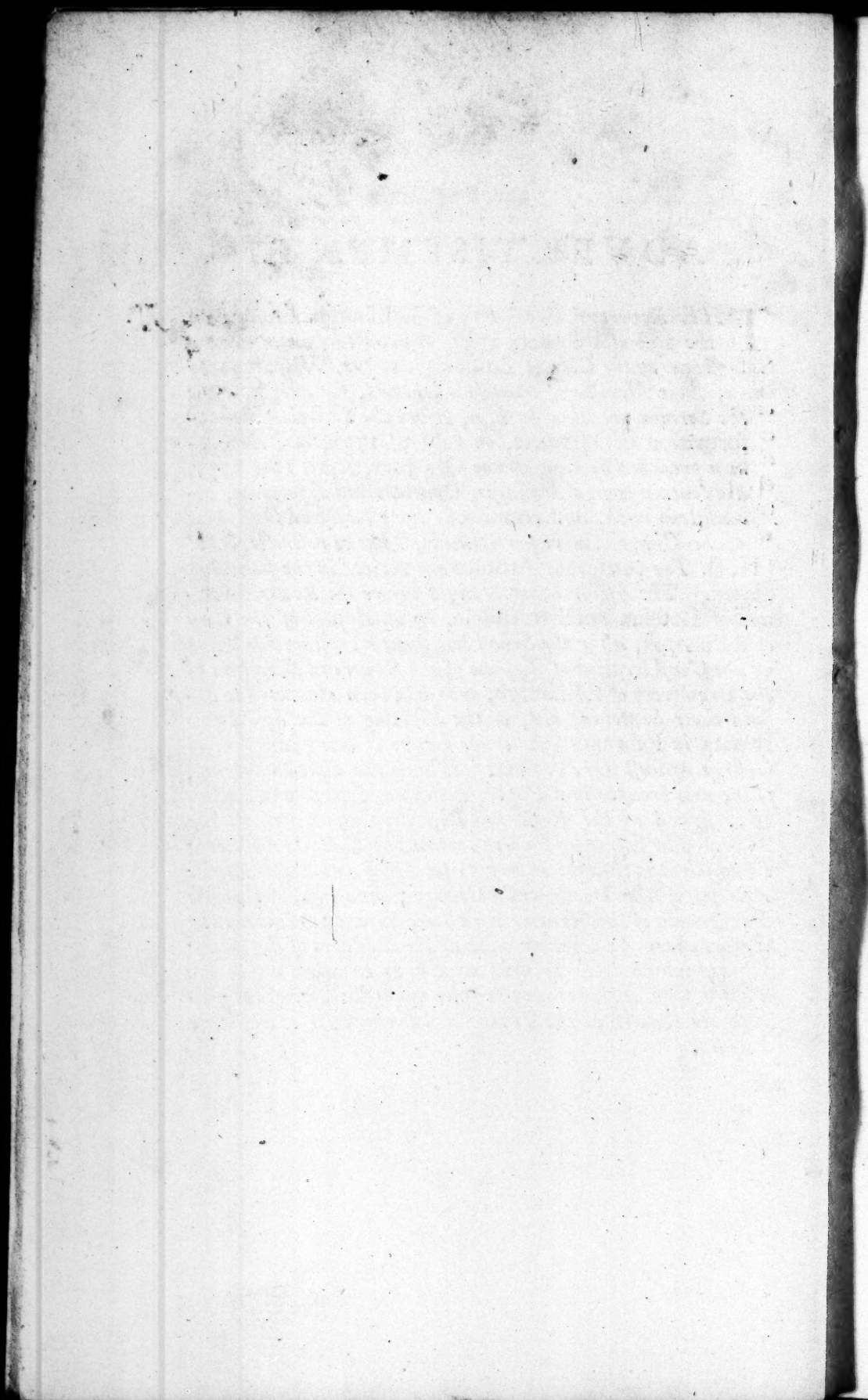
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reverend Presbytery of Edinburgh having, on the 23d of February 1737, refused to concur with a Call given by the City of Edinburgh to Dr. Wishart to be one of their Ministers, upon this Ground, for one, "That the Sermon preached by him, before the Societies for Reformation of Manners, on July 3d 1732, and the Sermon preached by him, at the Old Jury, April 19th 1731, did contain several Passages, Opinions and Assertions, inconsistent with, and contrary to the established Doctrines of this Church; more particularly, That he restricts, &c." [N. B. The particular Articles are recited in the following Paper.] The Affair being brought before the Reverend Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, by an Appeal of the City of Edinburgh, after the Synod had spent a considerable Time on the Consideration of it, some of the Reverend Members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, who had been appointed to defend their Sentence, did, at the Meeting of the Synod pro re nata in February last, crave Leave to bring in a special Charge against Dr. Wishart; Which the Synod allowing, there was brought in a Paper, intituled, Articles of Error, &c. signed by the Reverend Ministers mentioned in the Title. The following Papers contain the Doctor's Answers: In which it is thought proper to set down at Length all the Articles of the Presbytery's Charge; and also, the whole Paragraphs of the Sermons which are alledged to contain the Errors charged; together with all the Passages of the special Charge which were thought needful to be taken notice of: That so these Answers may be fully understood, without putting the Reader to the Trouble of turning over to any other Papers,



A N S W E R S

F O R

WILLIAM WISHART *Principal of the College of Edinburgh.*

THOUGH I might take notice of several things unformal in this *Special Charge*, as it is called, yet, to save the Reverend Synod's Time, I chuse to wave every thing of this nature, and proceed directly to consider the Articles of the Charge of the Reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh* against me, as they stand in their Act of the 23d of *February* 1737; together with the Reasonings and Enlargements of the Reverend Brethren upon them, in this Paper now given in to the Reverend Synod.

The *first* Article is, "That I restrict and confine the Magistrate's Power of punishing Offenders, to those Crimes that are committed against our Neighbours; whereas our *Confession* extends the Power of Magistrates, to the punishing of Blasphemies, Heresies, Breach of *Sabbath*, and other abominable Sins against the first Table of the Law."

For Proof of this Article, the Reverend Brethren refer to *Reformation Sermon*, p. 29. l. 30. — p. 30. l. 31. But I must beg leave to lay the intire Passage before the Reverend Synod, from p. 29. l. 30. — p. 31. l. 36. where, speaking to the Members of the Societies for *Reformation of Manners*, I say, "There is one Caution, particularly, which appears to me of such Importance, that I hope you'll forgive me, if I cannot but put you in mind of it; namely, That tho' there are other Methods proper to be used, for reclaiming our Neighbours from any thing that is amiss in them, as Instruction, Persuasion, and the Influence of a good Example; yet the Method of punishing Offenders, is to be confined to such Crimes of the vicious as are hurtful to others about them, or
" disturb

“ disturb the Peace of human Society : And therefore,
 “ you are carefully to beware, that, under Pretence of
 “ punishing Crimes, you do not unjustly restrain Men
 “ from the free Exercise of their natural and unalienable
 “ Right, of enquiring for themselves in Affairs of Reli-
 “ gion, and acting agreeably to the Light of their own
 “ Minds ; so far as it does not lead them to commit any
 “ Matter of Wrong or wicked Leudness, by which their
 “ Neighbours are injured, or their natural or civil Rights
 “ invaded. It would certainly be a most awkward and
 “ inconsistent Thing, if they, who set themselves to bear
 “ down and suppress Vice, should, under that Colour,
 “ set themselves to suppress, by Methods of Violence,
 “ the Exercise of a Right, without the Exercise of which
 “ in some measure there could be no Virtue ; the Right
 “ of Conscience, and private Judgment in Matters of
 “ Religion : How absurd and inconsistent would it be,
 “ if the Members of Societies for *Reformation of Man-*
 “ *ners* should themselves, and pretending to act in that
 “ Character too, be guilty of the greatest Iniquity and
 “ Injustice ? Should become *Persecutors and injurious* ?
 “ or permit themselves to be made the Instruments or
 “ Patrons of any Motion or Attempt, to deprive their
 “ Fellow-subjects of any of their valuable Liberties and
 “ Privileges ; or infringe any of those natural or civil
 “ Rights, in the Possession and Exercise of which it is
 “ the proper Office of the Civil Magistrate to protect and
 “ defend all good Subjects ?

“ Among many Evils, and Characters of Degeneracy,
 “ to be *lamented* in the present Age, there is one very
 “ great Blessing, which all good Men have Ground to
 “ *rejoyce in* ; That the Principles of Liberty, the Rights
 “ of Conscience and private Judgment, are better under-
 “ stood, and more regarded, than (for any thing I know)
 “ they have ever been in former Times ; and I believe I
 “ may adventure to say no less, if not more, in *Great*
 “ *Britain*, than in any other Country under the Sun.
 “ While this Happiness continues among us, as I hope
 “ it will continue, spread and grow ; especially while
 “ we are under the Protection of a Government, which,
 “ in the making of Laws, and the Administration of Ju-
 “ stice, acts with such a sacred Regard to *these Rights* ;
 “ we

" we may hope that valuable Improvements in all useful
 " Knowledge, shall take place, while the great Bars a-
 " gainst a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Re-
 " gard to worldly Interest, and the Fear of Man's Judg-
 " ment, are removed: And when Truth in Religion and
 " Morality obtains a fair Trial, Reason and Argument
 " free Scope, we may expect that Impostures of all Kinds
 " shall be more and more detected; the Kingdom of
 " Darknefs, which has been chiefly supported by Me-
 " thods of Violence, and the Interposal of the secular
 " Arm in Affairs of Conscience, shall be more and more
 " weakned; false Reasoning, and ill-plac'd Railery and
 " Buffoonry, will not long stand the Test, but one
 " Time or other expose themselves; and the Folly and
 " Absurdity of those shall more and more appear, *who*
 " *call Evil good, and Good evil, &c.*

" Only it concerns us to take great Care, that we *use*
 " *not our Liberty for a Cloak of Licentiousness*; that we
 " don't make use of that Liberty we have, and ought
 " to have, of acting *agreeably* to the Dictates of our Con-
 " sciences, *without Fear of Man's Judgment*; as a Pre-
 " tence to cover over-acting *contrary* to the Dictates of
 " our Consciences, *without Fear of the righteous Judg-*
 " *ment of God.* If such Licentiousness ever hurries Men
 " on to the committing Matter of Wrong or wicked
 " Lewdness against others, the governing Powers in ci-
 " vil Society, who are Guardians of the publick Peace,
 " have a Right, and it is their Duty to restrain it by
 " proper Animadversions, and *Punishments suited to the*
 " *Nature of the Offence.*"

Now, upon comparing these Words of mine with the
 Words of the Charge, I hope to make it appear to the
 Reverend Synod, that the Accusation laid against me, as
 it stands in this Article, is neither *true* nor *relevant*. My
 Accusers may call this *shifting the Question*, if they please;
 but I must beg leave to put the Members of the Reverend
 Synod in mind of it, that there is no Question at present
 before them concerning me, but, whether I have, upon
 the Articles alledged in this Charge, delivered any Thing,
 in the two Sermons now under their Consideration, con-
 trary to the Doctrine of this Church, contained in her
Confession of Faith, or not? For this is the general Charge
 of

of the Reverend Presbytery against me, " That the said
 " Sermons do contain Opinions and Assertions contrary
 " to the established Doctrine of this Church." Now this
 Question can only have these two Branches, the 1st,
 Whether I have actually there said what the Reverend
 Presbytery impute to me; or not? The 2^d, Whether, if
 I had, I had vented any Thing contrary to the *Confession*
of Faith? To both these, where the Articles give Occa-
 sion for it, I shall speak as distinctly as I can, and as ful-
 ly as I apprehend to be needful, submitting it to the Judg-
 ment of the Reverend Synod whether I speak closely and
 pertinently, or not. As to this first Article then, I plead,

First, That I have not, in the Passage referred to, restri-
 cted and confined the Magistrate's *Power of punishing*, as
 is alledged, in regard that, *imo*, no where throughout that
 whole Passage, do I take it on me to speak of the Magi-
 strate's *Power of punishing*, save in the last Words, where I
 say, That " if Men commit Matter of Wrong, &c. the go-
 " verning Powers in civil Society have a Right, and it is
 " their Duty to punish them." This Paragraph indeed
 asserts the Magistrate's *Power* of punishing some Things,
 but there are no Words in it that can justly be construct-
 ed to signify any *Confinement* of that Power whatsoever:
 And I submit it to the Judgment of the Reverend Synod,
 whether the Words, as they stand, do not contain an e-
 vident Truth; from which, therefore, no Error can, by
 just Consequence, be inferred. In another Paragraph of
 the above Passage, I speak something, indeed, concerning
 the Nature of the Magistrate's Office, where I say, that
 " 'tis the proper Office of the civil Magistrate, to protect
 " and defend all good Subjects in the Possession and Ex-
 " ercise of their natural and civil Rights." Now, in these
 Words, I am not speaking directly concerning the Ma-
 gistrate's *Power of punishing*, nor do I determine either
 who are to be reckoned *good Subjects*, or what are their
natural and civil Rights: and I submit it again to the Re-
 verend Synod, whether that general Assertion, as it stands,
 can be reckoned to contain any Error. Now, if these
 are all the Passages in that whole Part of my Sermon,
 where I speak any Thing either concerning the Magi-
 strate's *Power of punishing*, or the Nature of his Office,
 and in neither of these I do any Way *restrict and confine*
 the

the said Power, methinks I may fairly conclude, that, in the Place referred to, I do not restrict and confine, &c. as is alledged; for, certainly, what I am not at all *speaking of*, I am not restricting or confining. But, *ex abundanti*, I desire it may be adverted to.

2^{do}. That, from the Beginning of the Passage referred to, to the End of the first Paragraph, I am not laying down *Principles*, either concerning the Magistrate's Power of punishing, or concerning any Thing else, but speaking, by way of Advice or Caution, to the Members of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, among whom (as they made a Part of my Audience) there were no Magistrates; and all the Reasonings in that Paragraph are only intended to enforce that Advice or Caution. The Caution I give *them* is, concerning "the *Methods* to be used for *reclaiming* our Neighbours, &c." and concerning *these* I say, That "the *Method* of punishing Offenders, (*i. e.* so far as *they* are concerned in it, which is not by *inflicting* Punishments, but by applying for them, and setting them forward) is to be confined, &c." and I may refer it to the Judgment of the Reverend Synod, whether a Minister speaking in my Circumstances, (which I need not particularly mention, but may leave it to every Man's own Thoughts to suggest) to the Members of such Societies, speaking to them concerning the Methods to be used by them for reclaiming Offenders, might not have several Reasons for giving them an Advice and Caution in such general Terms, and enforcing it by such Arguments as I there use; whatever was his own Principle "concerning the Extent of the Magistrate's Power of punishing Offenders. The Reverend Brethren say, That I *tell* the Societies, that if "they attempt to carry it any farther, than the punishing of Crimes against the natural and civil Rights of our Neighbours, the Rights of private Judgment and Conscience *are in Hazard*." Now, admitting that my Words did contain an Insinuation of this Sort, might not a Minister, however far he reckoned the Magistrate's Power of punishing to extend, have Ground to apprehend, that if the Members of such Societies exceeded these Boundaries, in their Defations and Prosecutions, the Rights of private Judgment and Conscience *might be*

in Hazard? Might he not be at a Loss to find any more particular Directions than such a general one, which would come so well from him in his Circumstances, and would so effectually guard them against such Mismanagements as might *endanger* the Rights of Conscience and private Judgment? Further, I desire it may be attended to, that what I there caution the Members of these Societies against, is by me plainly described in these Words, "*Unjustly restraining Men from the free Exercise of their natural and unalienable Right, &c. suppressing, by Methods of Violence, the Exercise of the Right of Conscience, &c. depriving their Fellow-Subjects of any of their valuable Liberties and Privileges, or infringing any of their natural or civil Rights.*" And while I am for *their* thus confining that Method of reclaiming of Offenders, the bringing of them to Punishment, I am, at the same Time, for *extending* it to all such Crimes as are hurtful to others, or (*N.B.*) disturb the Peace of human Society; to all Matter of Wrong or wicked Lewdness, by which our Neighbours are injured, or their natural or civil Rights invaded. Upon the Whole then, I plead, That, in the Passage referred to, I have not restricted and confined the Magistrate's Power of punishing Offenders, as is alledged in this Article of the Charge; for I hope it will be allowed, that no doctrinal Error can justly and fairly be fixed on any Words, where it is not directly asserted, by Constructions and Implications put upon them; if the Words, as they stand, will fairly admit of a more favourable Construction. But,

2dly, I plead, that neither is this Part of the Charge *relevant*, as it stands. Admitting it were true, that, instead of expressing my self as above, I had been speaking directly concerning the *Magistrate's Power* of punishing Offenders, and had asserted, that this Power of punishing was to be confined to those Crimes that are committed against our Neighbours, or Crimes by which our Neighbours are injured, their natural or civil Rights invaded, or the Peace of human Society disturbed; I plead, that even in this Case, whether I had spoke true, or been in a Mistake, I had uttered nothing contrary to what is determined in our *Confession of Faith*, as is insinuated in the Charge: I say, *insinuated*; for, indeed, in the Reverend

"Tend Presbytery's Charge, as it stands, there is no Opposition justly and clearly stated between what I am charged with maintaining, and what the *Confession of Faith* is said to determine: To put a fair Opposition between what is charged upon me, and the Doctrine of the *Confession*, it should have been said; "Whereas our *Confession* extends the Power of the Magistrate to the punishing of Crimes that are *not* committed against our Neighbours, or are not injurious to them; or, to Crimes by which our Neighbours are not injured, their natural or civil Rights are not invaded, nor the Peace of human Society disturbed." If this could not be *truly* said, it may be obvious to any calm and impartial Observer, that, admitting our *Confession* did extend the Power of Magistrates to the punishing of *Blasphemies, Heresies, &c.* 'tis nothing to the Purpose of maintaining an Opposition between the *Confession* and me; and the Instances and Exclamations of the Reverend Brethren upon this Head, can serve no better Purpose than to raise a Clamour, and expose a Man to the Resentment or Contempt of those who are more disposed to be alarmed with Sounds than attentive to Argument: For admitting I had asserted, that the Magistrate's *Power of punishing* is to be confined as is above expressed, and the *Confession* extended it in the Terms used by the Reverend Presbytery, certainly I could not be said to have contradicted the *Confession* in *express Terms*; neither could I be reckoned to have done it, by any *just* and necessary *Consequence*, unless either the *Confession of Faith*, or I, had asserted, that the *Blasphemies, Heresies, &c.* to the punishing of which it is said to extend the Power of Magistrates, were not Crimes hurtful to our Neighbours, or that a Man could not, in the committing of such *abominable Sins against the First Table of the Law*, be guilty of any Matter of Wrong or wicked Lewdness, by which his Neighbours are injured, or the Peace of human Society disturbed; but as it is not so much as alledged that I have any where asserted this, neither do I think the *Confession of Faith* can be alledged to contain any such Assertion. And, without taking upon me to defend as a Truth what I have already pled to be no where asserted in my Sermon, I might venture to affirm, that there are several Crimes, which, when

considered with relation to the Divine Law, are more commonly ranked as Transgressions against the First than against the Second Table of that Law; which yet may be highly injurious to our Neighbours, and subversive of all Order and Government; and in this View may be considered in political Laws, and have proper Punishments assigned to them; or Men may, in committing of them, be guilty of invading the natural or civil Rights of others; or disturbing the Peace of human Society; and, in that View, may be punished by the Civil Magistrate. In short, supposing I had asserted as above, the true Question between me and any who would oppose me, would not so properly be, what particular Instances of Crimes may be punished by the Civil Magistrate? as, in what *View* any Crimes do fall under his Cognizance, and are punishable by him? Whether merely, as religious Mistakes, or Sins in the Sight of God contrary to true Religion; or, as hurtful to Mankind, Invasions of the natural or civil Rights of others, disturbing to the Peace of Society, or subversive of Order and Government? This is the Point to which I must desire the Reverend Brethren to speak, if they have a mind to speak any Thing to the Purpose; and to show where the *Confession of Faith* has determined, that Crimes are to be punished by the Civil Magistrate in the first of these Views: Else all the Instances they adduce against me, and all their hideous Outcries, are quite foreign to the Question, and, however they be intended, can serve no better Purpose than to overcloud the Argument, and raise a blind Clamour, while the true Point in question is kept out of Sight.

For, they who confine the Magistrate's Power of punishing to such Crimes as disturb the Peace of Society, or invade the private Rights of others; as they reckon that the Affairs of Conscience and Religion, *as such*, do not come under the coercive Power of the Civil Magistrate; and that a Man's Errors in Religion, or the Worship of God, do not *expose* him to be punished by the Magistrate, provided he is doing no Hurt to his Neighbours, and giving no Disturbance to Society: So, on the other hand, they as readily allow, that Pretences of Conscience, or even the leading of a mistaken and misguided Conscience, do not *exempt* a Man from Punishment, if he

he does Hurt to his Neighbours, or disturbs the publick Peace. And while they confine the Power of punishing to Injuries, or Disturbances of the Peace of Society, they as readily extend it to *all* such Crimes, and *every thing* that justly comes under that View, whether, considered with regard to the *Divine Law*, they are Sins against the first or second Table of that Law. Nor do they at all question, that there are several *abominable Sins against the first Table of the Law*, which are hurtful to the Peace of Society, or to Mens private Rights; and in the Commission of which Men may be guilty of injuring their Neighbours, or disturbing the publick Peace; and in this View may be punished by the Civil Magistrate. Withal, they will readily allow, that Societies entred into for religious Purposes, that are consistent with the publick Peace and Welfare, (as *all* Societies entred into for the Purposes of *true Religion and Christianity* must certainly be) are as well under the Protection of the Civil Magistrate, according to the Nature and End of his Office, as Societies entred into for any other lawful Purpose; and therefore, he has a Right, and it is his Duty, to protest the Church of Christ from Injury, Violence and Oppression, and every real Disturbance of its Peace and Quiet (a). But they reckon, that all Use of Force or Punishment, in the Affairs of Conscience or Religion, considered *as such*, is contrary to the natural and unalienable Rights of Mankind, the proper Office of the Civil Magistrate, the Nature of true Religion, and the Spirit of Christianity; and therefore, are for confining the Civil Magistrate's Power of punishing, to Crimes that are hurtful to private Persons, or to the Publick.

Now, without taking upon me to determine, whether these Principles are true or not, which I conceive is not the Question at present before the Reverend Synod, I cannot yet be apprehensive, that there can any thing be found in them contrary to the established Doctrine of this Church. I own, I am not a little confirmed in this Sentiment, by the plain and strong Declaration of these Principles made in the Preface, published several Years ago,

(a) Does not this plainly imply a Right to *punish* any thing that is a real Disturbance of the Peace of the Kirk?

to an Edition of our *Confession of Faith*; where the worthy Author speaks, not only in his own Name, but also in the Name of the Church herself, and as declaring her Sentiments. 'Tis true, that Preface is declared, in an Advertisement prefixed to it, to have been composed by a *private Hand*; but I am sure that it never was censured by any Judicatory of this Church, as containing any Error, or false Representation of the Sentiments of the Church, with regard to the Principles of Liberty: And it is well known to have been composed by the Hand of one of the most shining Ornaments the Church of *Scotland* could boast of, for his Years; one who, as he was bless'd with uncommon Abilities and Capacities, wanted not the best Opportunities of being thoroughly acquainted with the Principles and Doctrine of the Church; and whose Sincerity, in giving a faithful Representation of them, no Man, I hope, will dare to call in question.

That worthy and ingenious Author speaks in the most honourable general Terms concerning the Principles of Liberty; calling them, "The truly noble Protestant Principles of Liberty and private Judgment;" and, "that noble and unalienable Privilege of a rational Creature, the Right of private Judgment:" And what does he call *the Right of private Judgment*? "A Right to enquire and judge for one's self, provided, even against his Conscience, he keeps his Judgment to himself?" No, that noble Soul (I well knew him) was a Stranger to such low trifling: And this we shall see presently; for he further plainly and clearly declares his Sentiments in these Words, That "Freedom is the Birth-right of Mankind (*p. 52.*)" And, "As every Man must judge for himself; and answer to God for his own Soul, he hath a Right, *independent of another* (*a*), to chuse what Religion he will embrace:— Nor can any Man, without he show a plain Commission from Heaven, which he will *never be able to produce*, pretend to judge
" in

(*a*) Here, it is remarked, *not independent of God*. No, surely: but a Right *independent of any other Man* is all that is wanted, to exempt him from *Punishment from Man* on account of his Exercise of that Right, while he is invading no Right of any other Man, but only exercising a Right he has *independent of any other Man*.

" in Matters of Religion for another, and oblige him to
 " a Compliance with his Dictates (p. 53.)" And "Eve-
 " ry private Person hath a natural Right to judge for
 " himself in Matters of Religion; and to pitch upon
 " those Opinions, which, after his best Endeavours, he
 " fees worthy of his Choice, and most agreeable to Rea-
 " son and Revelation; and in the further Knowledge
 " and Improvement of which, he *endeavours to be as-*
 " *sisted* by those who may be most helpful to him (p. 54.)"
 And (p. 111. & 112.) asserting, *That the Apostles had*
Reason to complain of their Sufferings, he does not rest that
intirely on this Bottom, *That they were in the right*, and
 had Truth of their Side; and the *Empire* was in the
wrong, and its Religion false; but, says he, "The A-
 " postles indeed had Reason to complain of their Suffer-
 " ings for Righteousness sake; the murdering and tortu-
 " ring them, *for differing from the Empire in their Senti-*
 " *ments*, being a *manifest Encroachment upon the Liberties*
 " *of Mankind*, and a Prosecution altogether unjustifi-
 " able." And, (p. 115.) in Answer to the Objection
 against Confessions of Faith, drawn from "the Distur-
 " bances and Animosities they occasion in the World,
 " and the great Disadvantage they are to Peace and Cha-
 " rity," this excellent Author says, "It was when *Creeds*
 " claimed an absolute Submission and implicate Faith,
 " when they were *edged with the Sword*, and carried a-
 " long with them Blood and Torture, that they became
 " very dangerous Tools, and fatal to the Peace of Man-
 " kind. Consult the History of the Church in all Ages,
 " and it will be found, that Persecution, and an *Invasion*
 " *of the Rights of others*; a Humour of *imposing* the Faith
 " of the prevailing Party upon the Minority, and enfor-
 " cing this Invasion on the Consciences of Christians, by
 " Fines, Imprisonments, and Death itself, were the
 " Springs of all the Evils complained of." And, not
 only does this worthy Author deliver such Sentiments in
 his own Name, but, speaking in the Name of the Church
 of *Scotland*, he says, (p. 57.) "From the sacred Oracles
 " *we are convinced*, that a *free Choice* is the very Soul of
 " Religion, and *every Man must follow* (*i. e.* act agree-
 " ably to) the Dictates of his Conscience." And (p. 59.)
 "No Persons maintain with a more fervent Zeal, and
 " put

“ put a greater Value upon the Liberty of Christians,
 “ and the Right of *private Judgment*, than we do ; or,
 “ with a greater Indignation and Contempt, abhor the
 “ Tyranny of the *Romish Church*, or any arbitrary
 “ Claims that may be made by others over the Conscien-
 “ ces of the People.” And (p. 62. & 63.) “ Did indeed
 “ any Society oblige People, independent of it, to in-
 “ corporate with them, and subscribe to their Constitu-
 “ tions and Decisions in religious Matters : Did they ei-
 “ ther *force* an Assent to their established Confessions at
 “ the Beginning ; or, after the Person had once agreed
 “ to them, did they, in a strict Sense, *punish him* for an
 “ Alteration of his Sentiments afterwards, and for a-
 “ bandoning the publick Standard (*i. e.* declaring and
 “ professing that Alteration of his Sentiments) “ upon a
 “ more impartial Enquiry, and, on that Account, *de-*
 “ *prive him of any Advantage* he had a Claim to, *independ-*
 “ *ent of the Society* (a) : This were indeed to exceed
 “ the Boundaries of a *private Judgment*, and could not
 “ be justifiable, unless such could produce a Right to re-
 “ gulate the Judgment of others, and *lord it over their*
 “ *Faith*. But then, neither the *Principles* nor the *Prac-*
 “ *tice of our Church* lead that Way, or are in the least
 “ exposed to the Objection. *We* abhor Persecution in
 “ every

(a) I have found no Notice taken of this whole Paragraph,
 or, particularly, of these last mentioned Words of it, which
 most clearly show the worthy Author's Mind on this Argu-
 ment: But, instead of that, other Passages of the *Preface* are ad-
 duced, which, it may be evident to any one who reads them
 in their Connexion, have no Relation to *civil Pains and Pe-*
nalties, but are only intended to engage us, with Zeal and Ear-
 nestness, to contend, by *other Methods*, for the great Articles
 of our Faith. What Inconsistency can there be betwixt *that*,
 and excluding the Use of civil or corporal Penalties in Matters
 of Conscience or Religion, considered *as such*? May we not
 use the strongest Arguments against Hereticks, the warmest Ex-
 postulations and most serious Reproofs, nay, *reject* them, if
 they are not reclaimed by a *first or second Admonition*? and yet
 not use external Force or Violence in Matters of Conscience;
 or, as this Author expresses it, “ in a strict Sense *punish* them,
 “ or *deprive them of any Advantages* they have a Claim to,
 “ *independent of our Society*.”

every Shape in which it hath appeared; and are never
 for compelling others to subscribe our Confessions, or
 submit to our Institutions; being sensible that every
 Man hath an *equal Right with us* to follow (*i. e.* act a-
 agreeably to) the Light of his Understanding, and the
 Dictates of his Conscience; and that the Terrors of
 Blood and Torture are Arguments *intirely foreign* to
 the Design and the Spirit of Christianity; can never tend
 to advance its Interests; nor be *possibly reconciled* with
 two great fundamental Maxims of it, *Meekness* and
Charity; and that *Banishments, Confiscations, or Im-*
prisonments, are Methods of Persuasion; by which *no*
Man, or Body of Men, have a *Title* to recommend their
 Doctrines to others. *We* are convinced; that these are
 not the Arms whereby Truth and Righteousness spread
 their Victories over the Minds of Men; and that they
 are only the *Tools of Error and Ignorance*, calculated to
root out all Religion, oppress Virtue, and extinguish
Light. *We* have as great a Horrour as the most vio-
 lent Enemies of Confessions; at that *Antichristian*
Church which uses these Means of Conviction, and
 have as frightful Ideas of that Monster of Tyranny and
 Cruelty, and will ever look upon it as a *very bad Sign of*
a Cause; when it *leans upon such Supports*: So that we do
 not deny to others the *same Liberty* which we take to
 our selves."

I hope the Reverend Synod will not reckon it an im-
 pertinent or troublesom taking up of their Time, that I
 have taken the Liberty to lay before them at large, Pas-
 sages so much to the Purpose of the present Argument,
 and which were so sincerely intended to do Honour to
 this Church. It is further to be observed; that these De-
 clarations in favours of the Principles of Liberty are
 made; not in a private Pamphlet or Sermon, or a detach-
 ed Piece, but in a Preface to a new and correct Edition of
 the *Confession of Faith*: a Preface written on Purpose to vindic-
 ate and defend the Use our Church makes of that *Confessi-*
on; and which, in a great Measure, builds that Defence, not
 barely upon the *Consistency* of the Conduct of our Church
 in that Matter with these Principles of Liberty; but its
 being *founded upon them* (a). Sure, if it had been under-
 stood

(a) *Vid.* the said Preface, from p. 52. and downward.

stood in these Days, that those Principles were contrary to the Doctrine of our Church, contained in that very *Confession*; that pure Zeal for Truth, which is without Partiality and without Hypocrisy, could not have permitted such a Declaration of them to have passed without a severe Censure: Nay, it could scarcely have escaped the Imputation of being a treacherous Defence of the Principles and Conduct of our Church, and a betraying of her Cause.

But there are not wanting Arguments drawn from the Body of the *Confession of Faith* itself, to show, that the Principles so plainly professed by that worthy Author, cannot be contrary to the Doctrine contained in it. In *cap. 20. § 2.* there is this Article, "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men, which are in any Thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, if Matters of Faith or Worship." Now, what Use could be made of this *Freedom*, with which it is here declared God hath left the Conscience free? Or what could it amount to, if a Man was not to be left at Liberty to examine and judge for himself, what Doctrines and Commandments of Men are contrary to God's Word, or beside it in Matters of Faith or Worship, and to act agreeably to that Judgment? So that for Men to apply Force or Punishment in the Affairs of Conscience, seems to be a plain Infringement and Violation of that Liberty with which the *Confession of Faith* declares God hath left the Conscience free. Again, in *chap. 23. § 4.* there is this Article, "Infidelity, or Difference in Religion, doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal Authority, nor free the People from their due Obedience to him." Here, 'tis hoped, none will pretend, that the Composers of our *Confession* meant only *Heart-Unbelief*, or a Difference in Religion which the Magistrate keeps to himself, and no Body knows of; but the plain Meaning must be, of *known* Infidelity, or a different religious Profession and Way of Worship. The Reverend Brethren think the Sense of this Article is, 'That there is no DIVINE CONSTITUTION depriving the Magistrate of his Office, or debarring him from the Exercise of it, because of Infidelity or Difference in Religion;' but I conceive

conceive, the plain and obvious Meaning of the Article is, that these Things do not of themselves, or in their *own Nature*, make void his Authority; for if they did, there would be no Need of any express Constitution, either divine or human, to do it; and it would certainly be true, that Infidelity, or Difference in Religion, "*doth*" "make void the Magistrate's Authority," if *in their own Nature* they did so, tho there was no divine Constitution depriving him of his Office. Having thus cleared the Meaning of the Article, the Argument from it is this: Upon whatever Principles of Government this Article is built, will it not plainly follow, by a Parity of Reason, "That Infidelity, or Difference in Religion, does not make void the People's just Rights and legal Privileges, nor free the Magistrate from the Obligation to protect and defend them." If Infidelity, or Difference in Religion *in the Magistrate*, does not make void his Authority to make wholesom Laws for the Good of the Community, and to enforce these Laws by proper Penalties; nor free the People from the Obligation to obey these Laws, and pay just Tribute for the Support of his Government: Can, then, Infidelity, or Difference in Religion *in the Subjects*, make void their natural or civil Rights (a), their just and valuable Liberties and Privileges, or free the Magistrate from the Obligation to protect them in the Enjoyment of these Privileges, and Exercise of these Rights? unless it be pretended, that Sovereign Power may more safely for the Society be intrusted in the Hands of an Infidel, than private Liberty! so that it would seem, that the Principles of Liberty above stated, p. 12, 13. must be found agreeable to the Doctrine of this Church; the several Branches of her Doctrine being so understood, as to maintain them consistent with one another.

But still it may be alledged, that all this is a Protestation

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(a) i. e. Their Right to continue Members of the civil Society, and to live safely in it; their Right to the Liberty of their Persons, and the Enjoyment of their Goods and Properties; and their Right of Conscience, or the Right they have, *independent of any other Man*, to choose what Religion they will embrace; which are all Branches of *private Liberty*.

tion against Matter of Fact; and notwithstanding all that has been said, to prove that these Principles *cannot be contrary* to the Doctrine of this Church, yet, *in fact*, there are Articles in our *Confession of Faith*, which maintain the Doctrine of *penal Laws* in the Affairs of Conscience, and assert the Right and Duty of the Civil Magistrate, to punish Men for their Religious Errors, considered *as such*, if they vent or publish them. To examine this Point, I shall now consider the Passages of the *Confession of Faith*, that are adduced as against me upon this Head. The first mentioned by the Reverend Presbytery in their References, and also adduced by the Reverend Brethren on this first Article of the Charge, is in *chap. 23. § 3.* "The Civil Magistrate hath Authority, and it is his Duty to take Order that Unity and Peace be preserved in the Church; that the Truth of God be kept pure and intire; that all Blasphemies and Heresies be suppressed; all Corruptions and Abuses in Worship and Discipline prevented or reformed; and all Ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed." Now, in this Article, I can see no Assertion of the Magistrate's Right and Duty to use Force in the Affairs of Conscience, considered *as such*; or to punish any Men merely for their religious Mistakes, or for worshipping God according to their Consciences: Nor do I see how any such Principle can be alledged to be implied in this Article; unless it is asserted, that the civil Magistrate hath *no other Way left of taking Order that Unity and Peace be preserved in the Church, &c.* but by using Force or Punishment in the Affairs of Conscience; which, I hope, no Member of this Church will assert: On the contrary, the following Words in this Section make express Mention of *some Methods* by which the Magistrate may take Order for these Purposes, without the least Mention of *Force or Punishment*. But the Reverend Brethren, in quoting the above Article, stop at these Words, "That all Blasphemies and Heresies be *suppressed*;" and, after quoting some Texts of Scripture, as if adduced in the *Confession* for Proof of *that Part* of the Article, add, "The adducing of these Texts clearly shews, that by *suppressing* is meant punishing by corporal or civil Punishments." But what is that to the present Purpose, tho it was true? does

does this determine the *View* in which the civil Magistrate is to punish any Thing? does it determine, that he is to punish Men for their Errors in Faith or Worship, considered *as such*? Withal, it is to be observed; that the Reference, in the *Confession of Faith* itself, to Passages of Scripture on this Article, is only General to a Train of Passages relating to the *whole* Article, as above recited; and does not particularly point out what Passages are intended to be referred to on every *particular Branch* of it: And I believe no Passage of Scripture, from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of the *Revelation*, can be pertinently adduced to prove, that *suppressing* and *punishing* are synonymous Terms, or Words of the same precise Import and Signification.

The other Passage of the *Confession of Faith* adduced as against me, though quoted by the Reverend Brethren upon the *second* Article of the Charge, falls properly enough under Consideration here: It is thus quoted by them, from chap. 20. § 4. "And for *their* publishing of such Opinions, &c." Here, from the very first Words of this Quotation, it is evident, that the Words of the *Confession of Faith* are imperfectly and abruptly quoted; a Method by which every one knows the Meaning of any Author may be greatly misrepresented: Therefore, to understand what this *their* refers to, we must read from the Beginning of the Sentence: "They who, upon Pretence of Christian Liberty, shall oppose any lawful Power, or the lawful Exercise of it, whether it be Civil or Ecclesiastical, resist the Ordinance of God: And, for their publishing of such Opinions, or maintaining of such Practices as are contrary to the Light of Nature, or to the known Principles of Christianity, whether concerning Faith, Worship or Conversation; or to the Power of Godliness; or such erroneous Opinions or Practices, as, either in their own Nature, or in the Manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external Peace and Order which Christ hath established in the Church; they may lawfully be called to Account, and proceeded against by the Censures of the Church, and by the Power of the Civil Magistrate." Where it is plain, *imo*, That the Persons, concerning whom it is said, in the subsequent part of

of the Article, that, "for *their* publishing, as is there
 "mentioned, they may be so and so proceeded against,"
 are, in the Beginning of the Article, characterized as tur-
 bulent Persons, disturbing the publick Peace; not only,
 disobeying lawful Commands, but *opposing* or *resisting* a
 lawful Power, or the lawful Exercise of it: Whether it
 be true or false, it is not said in this Article, that "any
 "Man whatsoever, for publishing any of the Things
 "there mentioned, may be so and so proceeded against;"
 but, "they who *oppose*, &c. for *their* publishing, &c."
 How can this Passage, then, be adduced, as an Instance
 of our *Confession's* determining, that the Civil Magistrate
 may punish erroneous Persons (or any Persons) in any
 other View, than as Disturbers of the Peace of Society,
 or (which is indeed included in that) Invaders of the pri-
 vate Rights of others? But, *2do*, Even supposing these
 Words were away, and it was simply asserted in the Ar-
 ticle, "That *Men*, for their publishing, &c." What is
 it asserted may be done with them? "They may lawfully
 "be called to Account, and proceeded against by the
 "Censures of the Church, and by the Power of the civil
 "Magistrate." Here, again, it is plain, we have general
 Terms, of a softer Nature than the Term *punished*: Sure,
 if it had been the Mind of the Composers of our *Confessi-*
on of Faith to have determined clearly, "That erroneous
 "or heretical Persons, *as such*, were to be punished by
 "the Sword," it had been as easy for them to have said,
 in the Article formerly mentioned, "That all Heresies
 "and Blasphemies be **PUNISHED**;" and, in this Article,
 "proceeded against by the Censures of the Church, and pu-
 "nished by the Power of the Civil Magistrate;" as, in that
 Article, to have used the more general Word *suppressed*;
 and here, the softer Terms of *called to Account, and pro-*
ceeded against: Sure, there must have been some Rea-
 sons for their chusing to express themselves in the softer
 and more general Terms. Let us see what Construction
 the Words, as they stand, and without any straining, will
 naturally bear: What is said concerning the Publishers
 of such Things as are there mentioned? why, That "they
 "may lawfully be—proceeded against by the Censures
 "of the Church, and by the Power of the Civil Magi-
 "strate." Where it is plain, that the *Power of the Civil*
Magi-

Magistrate is brought in subſequentially to the *Cenfures of the Church*; and by both it is aſſerted, That “ ſuch Perſons may lawfully be proceeded againſt.” May not the natural Meaning of this be, That “ the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate may lawfully be interpoſed, in conſequence, and in ſupport of the Cenfures of the Church?” and who will queſtion that this may lawfully be done? ſeeing the Peace of Society, and the Security of private Rights, may ſome Times require it: For Inſtance; when Perſons, for ſome Practices mentioned in this Article, are, by the Cenfures of the Church, debarred from Church-communion; and, not ſubmitting to theſe Cenfures, will violently intrude themſelves into it; May not the Civil Magiſtrate interpoſe, and proceed againſt them by his Power, to reſtrain them from ſuch Violence (a)? But, 3tio, *ex abundante*, Suppoſing that the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate, by which it is aſſerted, that the Perſons here deſcribed may lawfully be proceeded againſt, implied Punishment; and even ſubſtituting into the Article, inſtead of *proceeded againſt*, *puniſhed* by the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate, ſtill it is to be obſerved, that the Article does not aſſert, that ſuch Perſons ought, *in all Caſes*, to be ſo proceeded againſt; or, that the Affairs of Conſcience and Religion, *conſidered as ſuch*, do fall under the coercive Power of the civil Magiſtrate: In *ſome Caſes*, and *in another View*, it is perfectly agreeable to the Principles I have above ſtated, that *they may* fall under it; and the Article only aſſerts, that Perſons, “ for their publiſhing ſuch Opinions, &c. may lawfully be ſo proceeded againſt;” which will hold true, if there *may* Caſes happen, in which ſuch Perſons will be obnoxious to Punishment from the civil Magiſtrate, agreeably to the Nature and Deſign of his Office; which they will be (even according to the Principles above mentioned) if, either by the *Nature* of the Opinions publiſhed or Practices maintained, or by their *Manner of publiſhing* or maintaining them, they are guilty of injuring their Neighbours,

(a) Here it is ſaid, “ This is degrading the Civil Magiſtrate into a *Beadle*, who may reſtrain them by the Order of the “ *Minifter*.” But it is denied, that the *Beadle*, or *Minifter* either, have a Right to uſe Force againſt them, without the Authority of the Civil Power.

bours, or disturbing the publick Peace : For, indeed, according to the Principles I have above stated, the Persons described in this Article *may, or may not, lawfully* be punished by the civil Magistrate, according as the Case is stated. If the Opinions a Man publishes, or the Practices he maintains; however they be religious Mistakes, yet are not pernicious to the publick Peace, or to the natural or civil Rights of any of his Neighbours; and, if he publishes and maintains them in a quiet and peaceable Manner, and in a way of calm Reason and Argument, and goes about his religious Worship in such a Manner as to give no Disturbance; according to these Principles he ought not to be punished by the civil Magistrate : But, on the other hand, if the Opinions a Man publishes, or the Practices he maintains, are, in their Nature, not only religious Errors, or false Worship, but likewise pernicious to the natural or civil Rights of others, or to the Peace of human Society; or, if a Man publishes his religious Opinions, or maintains his religious Practices, in such a Manner as to do Hurt to any of his Neighbours, or break the publick Peace; then, according to these Principles, as related p. 12. & 13. he is liable to be punished by the civil Magistrate, according to the Nature of the Offence; and as the Ends of civil Government may require. Upon the whole, then, if the above Article of the *Confession of Faith* be not strained beyond what the Words, as they stand, do necessarily signify, in their plain and obvious Meaning; and according to the common Use of Language (as certainly no Article in a publick Confession should be) there appears nothing in it contrary to these Principles above stated; or which, in a fair Construction, can imply “the Lawfulness of the Use of Force or Punishment in the Affairs of Conscience and Religion, considered as such (a).”

And

(a) It may be evident to the impartial Reader, that, in the above Reasonings on these two Articles of the *Confession of Faith*, I am not putting any Glosses upon the Words of our Confession; but only removing the unnatural Glosses which some would seem to force upon them, Glosses which I apprehend the Words, as they stand, will not bear: and am doing this, by calling, and endeavouring to fix the Attention of the Reader to the *precise Words*

And thus I have *more than proved*, that there is nothing in this Article of the *Confession* that belongs to the Purpose for which it is adduced against me: For I have proved this, not only concerning the Article as it stands; but even upon allowing of some considerable Alterations in it, leaving out some material Words, and substituting others in their Place. I shall only add, that it may at least be made a Question, whether, if this Article of our *Confession* was to be taken in the View in which the Reverend Brethren seem to take it, when they adduce it against me, it would not prove too much, even upon their own Principles? For the Reverend Brethren will no doubt allow, that publishing in Defence of the Divine Right of Episcopacy, is “publishing an erroneous Opinion, in its own Nature destructive to the external Peace and Order which Christ hath established in the Church.” If, then, the Article absolutely asserted, That “any Persons, for publishing any such Opinions as are there described, might lawfully be *punished* by the civil Magistrate;” Would it not plainly follow, that any Man, for publishing any thing in Defence of the Divine Right of Episcopacy, might lawfully be punished by the civil Magistrate, tho’ he did it in the most peaceable Manner, and managed his Argument with the utmost Discretion and Civility? a Consequence which it is presumed the Reverend Brethren will hardly stand to.

There is an Article of the *Confession of Faith*, which, though it is not adduced by the Reverend Brethren against me, either upon *this* or the *second* Article of the Reverend Presbytery’s Charge, yet was insisted upon before the last Meeting of the Reverend Synod; and therefore, it may be needful to take some Notice of it: It is in *chap. 23. § 1.* where it is said, “That God — hath ordained civil Magistrates to be under him over the People, for
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Words, as they stand in the *Confession*, and the plain and obvious Meaning of these Words, according to the common Use of Language. Besides, that, in the whole of this Argument, (from p. 10. l. 30.) I am only *pleading* against the *Relevancy* of this *first* Article of the Presbytery’s Charge. So that, if any thing is wrong or defective in this Plea, the only Conclusion that can be fairly drawn is; That I have, so far, made an insufficient Defence.

"*his own Glory.*" Upon this last Clause great Stress was laid : But I am at a loss to understand what Application it can admit of to the present Question; seeing it is a general Thing, as true with regard to Men in other Stations of Life, as with regard to the civil Magistrate : Every Man, in the Station of Life in which Providence hath placed him, and the lawful Calling and Business he is engaged in, is placed there by God *for his own Glory*; though there may be particular Reasons for taking special Notice of it concerning those, who are placed in the more eminent Stations of Life, and of the greatest Importance to Mankind : That *general Character*, therefore, does not determine the *particular Nature* of the Office or Station in which any Man is placed; and it will no more follow, from the Magistrate's being "ordained by God" to be under him over the People, *for his own Glory*, and "armed with the Power of the Sword," that he is to use that Power for the punishing of any, but such as it belongs to the particular Nature and End of his Office to punish; than it will follow, from an Artificer's being placed in *his* Station by God, *for his own Glory*, and in Providence furnished with the Tools of his Trade, that he is to make Use of these Tools for the *Punishment of evil Doers*, or for any other Purpose than the particular Nature of his lawful Trade and Business requires. I hope no Minister of this Church will adduce the Words above mentioned to prove, that it belongs to the Office of the civil Magistrate to do *every thing* by which the *Glory of God* may be promoted; seeing the *Confession of Faith*, in the Beginning of § 3. of this same very Chapter, declares, That "he may not assume to himself the Administration of the Word and Sacraments :"
By which I hope it will be readily owned among us, that the *Glory of God* has been more promoted in the World, than by all the Use that has ever been made of the Sword, since it was first drawn.

Upon the whole, then, I submit it to the Reverend Synod, whether I have not proved, that this *first* Article of the Charge against me is neither *true* nor *relevant*.

The *second* Article is, "That as I unwarrantably restrict the Power of Christian Governors, so I licentiously

“ oufly extend the Liberty of Christian Subjects, by lea-
 “ ving all Men to act *impunè*, and without Fear of Man’s
 “ Judgment, in all religious Affairs, agreeably to the
 “ Light of their own Minds ; thereby justifying the most
 “ boundless Toleration of Errors in the Christian Church,
 “ and opening a wide Door to Hereticks, openly to im-
 “ pugn, preach and print what they please against the
 “ known and most important Principles of Christianity :
 “ So that, in the Affairs of Conscience, and in the Trial
 “ of religious and moral Truths, free Scope may be gi-
 “ ven, not only to Argument and Reason, but also to
 “ Raillery and Buffoonry, without any Hazard from the
 “ secular Arm, in such Affairs.”

Without saying *any thing* concerning the strangely in-
 distinct Manner in which this Charge is laid, I might sa-
 tisfy my self with observing, that the only Passage of my
 Sermons, on which it is pretended to be founded, is that
 large one already adduced upon the preceeding Article :
 And that not only this Article is so connected with the pre-
 ceeding, that it must stand or fall with it ; but, as far as I can
 understand the main Thing pointed at in it, when it speaks
 of my *leaving all Men to act impunè*, &c. it is so intirely
 coincident with the former Charge, that I need do little
 more than desire the Reverend Synod to apply here what
 I have said, concerning the Truth and Relevancy of the
 preceeding Article : From which it may be evident, *how*
far I am for “ leaving *any* Men to act *impunè*, and with-
 “ out Fear of Man’s Judgment, &c.” And whether I
 can justly be said to do this without proper Restrictions ;
 or so, as to “ justify the *most boundless* Toleration of Er-
 “ rors in the Christian Church.” I own, I cannot see,
 how any Doctrine delivered by me, in the above Passage,
 has the least Tendency “ to justify either a *boundless*, or
 “ indeed *any* Toleration of Errors in the Christian
 “ Church ;” or to hinder the Exercise of the Discipline
 of the Church against any Error whatsoever ; and I hope
 the Reverend Synod will find it very easy to distinguish,
 betwixt tolerating Errors in the Christian Church, and
 permitting erroneous Persons, who are disposed to live
 peaceably, to live safely in civil Society : If some will
 call this last tolerating Errors in the Christian Church, it
 may yet be obvious to every impartial Person, whether a

Toleration *so limited*, as the Principles I have asserted, or even the Principles the Reverend Presbytery impute to me, require, can be properly termed a *boundless one*. The Reverend Presbytery add, That I hereby "open a wide Door to Hereticks openly to impugn, preach and print what *they please*, &c." as if this last Phrase was synonymous, or precisely of the same Import, with Mens "acting agreeably to the Light of their Minds, or the Dictates of their Consciences." If any Man thinks so, I must beg leave to differ from him. For my part, if any Man showed the bitterest and most unprovoked Spite and Malice against me; if he cast Iniquity upon me, wrested my Words, and loaded me with Reproaches, I might very readily say, that such a Man treated me *as he pleased*; without ever intending to signify by these Words, that he "acted agreeably to the Light of his own Mind, or the Dictates of his Conscience," in so doing. The Reverend Presbytery go on with their Inferences: "So that, in the Affairs of Conscience, and in the Trial of religious and moral Truths, free Scope may be given, not only to Argument and Reason, but also to Raillery and Buffoonry, without any Hazard from the secular Arm in such Affairs." I have indeed asserted, That "when Truth in Religion and Morality obtains a fair Trial, Reason and Argument free Scope, we may expect that Impostures of all kinds shall be more and more detected." I submit it to the Reverend Synod, whether this be any Error: The Reverend Presbytery indeed are pleased to add, with what Candour and Justice let the Reverend Synod judge, That, according to me, "free Scope is to be given also to Raillery and Buffoonry, without any Hazard from the secular Arm in such Affairs;" for no other Reason, that I can discover, but because, in enumerating some Advantages which may be expected to flow from this fair Trial, I say, "False Reasoning, and ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry, will not long stand the Test, but one Time or other expose themselves:" And no where, in either of these Sermons, do I use this Expression, the *secular Arm*; but in this Assertion, That "the Kingdom of Darkness has been chiefly supported by Methods of Violence, and the Interposal of the secular Arm in Affairs of Conscience."

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If this be an Error, it can be no Error in Doctrine, but only a Mistake in Fact; and must be an Error in which I apprehend I shall have the best and most orthodox Divines joining with me. The Reverend Brethren, in their Improvement upon this Article, have thought fit to lay the groundless Accusation yet more flatly, in these Words, "The Doctor is for such a licentious Liberty in the Trial of Religion and Morality, as not only Reason and Argument may have free Scope, but likewise, that false Reasoning, and ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry, may have a Hearing; and *his* Reason for it is, because these will not long stand the Test, but one Time or other expose themselves." Who, now, upon reading these Words, would not immediately think, that I had directly pled for it, that ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry *may have a Hearing*, and had assigned for it the Reason they mention? Who would imagine, that all this Imputation had no other Foundation, than my having barely asserted, That "false Reasoning, and ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry, will not long stand, &c.?" But they understood my Words to imply the Thing they have put upon them, then, Why could they not have contented themselves with saying so, and not have turned their groundless Suspicion into a positive Assertion? A groundless Suspicion it is; For my saying, That "when *Truth obtains a fair Trial*, false Reasoning, and ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry, will not long stand the Test," does no more imply, that I would have no Instances of *ill-placed Raillery and Buffoonry* otherwise treated, than to be left to that Test; than if I had asserted, That "did Christianity universally prevail among us, in its Life and Power, Violence and Oppression would be no more heard in our Land," it would imply, that I would have no Instances of *Violence and Oppression* otherwise treated, than to be left to the Prevalency of vital Christianity to extirpate them.

There remains little more to be said by me upon this Article, than to take notice of a Misrepresentation of some Part of that same Passage of my Sermon, where I call it "a very great Blessing, which all good Men have ground to rejoyce in, that the Principles of Liberty, the Rights of Conscience and private Judgment,"

are

are better understood, and more regarded in the present Age, than (for any Thing I know) they have ever been in former Times;" and add, "while this Happiness continues among us, as I hope it will continue, spread and grow, &c." This the Reverend Brethren very civilly call "the Language of the Libertines of the Age." But it may be evident to any attentive and impartial Observer, that, in this Passage, I am not speaking one Word concerning the Extent of the *Liberty that now obtains in Great Britain*, nor expressing any Wish or Hope concerning its spreading and Growth; but what I there call a *Blessing* and a *Happiness*, is, that the *Principles of Liberty, the Rights of Conscience and private Judgment*, are so well understood, and so much regarded among us; and if, in speaking of this, I should be thought to mistake in my Comparison of the *present Age* with *former Times*, I hope it will be considered with what Caution I express it, when I say, *For any Thing I know*. Now, if the worthy Author of the Preface to the *Confession of Faith* was in the right, when he bestowed such Encomiums on these Principles, calling them "the truly noble Protestant Principles of Liberty and private Judgment," I hope it is no Crime in me, to call a right *Understanding* of, and due *Regard* to the Principles of Liberty, the Rights of Conscience and private Judgment, prevailing among us, a *great Blessing* and a *Happiness*, and to *wish* this Happiness may *continue, spread and grow*; and if I was rash in expressing a *Hope* of this Kind, that, I hope, is no doctrinal Error; nor is there any Manner of Ground either for the Suspensions, or the positive Assertions of the Reverend Brethren upon this Head; nor any Manner of Foundation for the Queries they take the Liberty of putting to me, In one of these the Reverend Brethren seem to be merry, when they ask, "Would the Doctor have Liberty to *Arians* and *Socinians* to declaim from our Pulpits?" Which Question, however foreign to the present Purpose, the Doctor is ready to answer upon Demand, when once these Gentlemen have shown, "what natural or civil Right *Arians* and *Socinians* have to their Pulpits." I have, both in this, and the preceeding Article of the Charge, as I intend on the subsequent ones, choosed to take little or no Notice of the Authorities the Reverend Brethren

Brethren have thought fit to adduce to blacken me, as joyning with Infidels and Libertines; as well as some Authorities they have thought fit to bring against me. The only Point in question is, whether I have spoke Truth, or uttered Error contrary to the Doctrine established and professed in this Church? If I have delivered any Error, it will not make it true, though I had the whole Train of Divines reputed orthodox since the Days of the Apostle *John* to vouch for it. If I have spoken Truth, it will not make it false, though all the Infidels and Libertines in the World had said the same Thing. Therefore I do not give my self the Trouble to enquire, whether the Rev. Brethrens Quotations are either fairly made, or justly applied. If I had asserted, "That a Man, in straining Circumstances, is not to be hanged, or broke upon the Wheel, for one small Instance of Theft," I doubt not, I should have had all the Thieves and Pick-pockets in the World agreeing with me. Those Quotations of the R. B. may indeed serve another Purpose, though not to determine what is Truth or Error, and I shall not envy them any Joy that may give them. I remember indeed, that, at the last Meeting of the Synod, one of these Brethren said, they did not bring these Quotations to prove, "that I was a Deist or an Infidel. I thank him; but what then?" "That I agreed with them in *some Things*." And who does not? But if such Quotations had not been intended to blacken me, it had been easy to have found many joining with me in the Things for which they here arraign me, whose Praises will be in the Churches of Christ, while solid Learning and good Sense, serious Piety, pure and undefiled Religion, are in any Esteem among Men. But with what Consistency do these Gentlemen charge me with Licentiousness, and complain of my joining in *some Things* with the Libertines of the Age; when, at the same time, they take to themselves such Liberties, as directly to assert, that "I stile future Rewards and Punishments, Whips and Sugar-Plumbs; and call some Doctrines which the Youth are taught from their Catechisms, Matters of Nicety; and the teaching of these a training them up to be exquisite Metaphysicians; and name Catechisms themselves the Shibboleth of a Party?" Things which any Man, who attends to my Words,

Words, may easily be sensible I have never done. If they meant only that they understood such Things to be implied in my Words; the Candour and Sincerity which becomes all Christians, far more Ministers of the Gospel, might have led them to content themselves with saying so. But of this more afterwards. I found it necessary to take some Notice of it here, because the Reverend Brethren have thought fit, in their Enlargements upon this Article, to anticipate the groundless Accusations in some following ones, by charging me in the Terms above mentioned.

The *third* Article is, " That I am for removing Confessions, (they mean, *Confessions of Faith*) and freeing Persons from Subscriptions thereto, and *such other* great Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Regard to worldly Interests." This, I must take the Liberty to say, is an Allegation against me, for which there is not the least Shadow of Foundation in any Part of these Sermons referred to: Not only do I no where, in either of these Sermons, say the least Word against Confessions of Faith, or make the least Insinuation of *their* being *any* Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry; but I hope to make it evident to the Reverend Synod, and to every Man who will understand plain *English*, that, in the only Place where I speak of " great bars against a free and impartial Enquiry," the Place referred to by the Reverend Brethren themselves, I *could not possibly* mean such Confessions and Subscriptions, or intend to include them in that Expression; it is Part of the large Passage above referred to upon the first Article; where, speaking of a Happiness we are now actually in the Possession of, and at present enjoy in *Great Britain*, I say, "*While* this Happiness continues among us (and what that Happiness is, I have already shown) — we may hope that valuable Improvements in all useful Knowledge shall take place;" *while* the great Bars — are removed: *N. B. while they are removed.* The Reverend Synod will please to observe, that I am here plainly speaking of a Happiness which *now* takes place, and which took place *when I spoke* these Words; and therefore what I here call the great Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry, are such

such Bars as are now, and were then removed; so that I could not possibly intend to include under that Appellation any Thing that is not already, and was not then removed. A Man who had expressed himself in this Manner, "when the great Bars, &c. shall be removed," might possibly have meant Confessions of Faith, and Subscriptions to them; but, even then, it would not have been certain that he did mean them; because, though he had quite other Sentiments of them, there might be other Things, not yet removed, to which he might intend to give that Appellation, and so wish for the Removal of them: But a Man who, speaking of a present Happiness, used these Words, "while the great Bars, &c. are removed," could not possibly mean such Confessions and Subscriptions, if he knew how to express himself according to the plainest Rules of Grammar; and knew too, that Confessions of Faith, and Subscriptions to them, take place by Law in both Parts of Great Britain. In short, it is plain, that under the Character of "the great Bars, &c." I cannot be speaking of any Thing not removed, which I am for removing; as the Reverend Presbytery expresses it, but of what is actually removed; and if this, now, be not plain, I may despair of making any Thing so (a). I hope all true

(a) Against so clear a Proof of the Negative; it seems to appear to some a sufficient Evidence, that I must be for removing Confessions and Subscriptions, because "all who are against the civil Magistrate's punishing Men for their religious Errors, considered as such, are likewise against Confessions and Subscriptions?" But this is plainly not to found that Charge on any Words of mine, but on a Consequence from another Tenet not yet proved upon me, and a Consequence which I by no Means allow to follow. Indeed, even admitting the Fact, there could be no Force in the Consequence against me, unless it could be proved, that I maintain all the Writers on the Side of Liberty of Conscience to be perfectly consistent with themselves, or to have been led by that Principle to every other Tenet they maintain. But neither can I grant the Allegation to be Matter of Fact, because I know it to be a Mistake. The great Doctor Owen, in a Treatise which he has written on purpose, in Defence of Toleration, and against the civil Magistrate's punishing Men for their Errors in Faith or Worship, as such, expressly recom-

true PROTESTANTS among us will ever remember, with the greatest Thankfulness to God, what "great Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Regard to worldly Interests, and the Fear of Man's Judgment," have formerly taken place in these Lands, and are now, by the Blessing of God, removed; but if any Man should be of Opinion, that Confessions of Faith, and Subscriptions thereto, *must be included*, wherever these general Expressions, *great Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry*, are made use of, even though they are used in such a Manner, as plainly to exclude such Confessions from being any Part of the intended Meaning; I must beg leave to differ from him.

The subsequent Enlargements of the Reverend Brethren, upon this Article, contain little more than Misrepresentations of some Words of mine, which I have already obviated on the preceding Article, together with some Reflections of their own, which are much below Men of their Character. "The Doctor proposes, that valuable Improvements in all useful Knowledge may take place, *viz.* in Religion and Morality, which, we think, must be either some Discoveries of the Absurdity of some received Doctrines in our Confession, or, that some new Doctrines in Divinity will be found out, which have not been heard of before." Do they so? Do they, in Reality, know of no valuable Improvements in religious Knowledge, but finding out new Doctrines, or exploding old ones? It has hitherto been thought a valuable Improvement, when religious Knowledge spreads, when it gets into more Minds, especially if, in its happy Influence, it gets Possession of more Hearts; when

mends "the constant Practice of the Church in former Ages—" to consent into some Form of wholesom Words, that might be a discriminating *tessera* of their Communion in Doctrine," as a Practice "used in prime Antiquity,—having also *War-rant from the Word of God*, and being of singular Use to hold out unto all other Churches of the World our Apprehension of the Mind of God in the chief Heads of Religion. *Sermons and Tracts*, F. p. 315." I might also adduce, as an Instance, the worthy Author of the *Preface to the Confession of Faith*, see above, p. 17. and several other Instances might be brought; but these may suffice.

when particular Mens Errors are discovered and corrected, though the Truths publickly professed in the Church remain the same; when old Truths receive a further Illustration, and the Evidence of them is set in a clearer and stronger Light; when the Objections against them are more fully and clearly confuted, and the Absurdity of these made more to appear. But it might seem an Affront to the Understanding of the Reverend Synod to insist longer on these Things.

Further, the Reverend Brethren, for supporting this Article of the Charge, refer to these Words in my *Char. Sermon*. p. 30. "Sure I am, that a wise and practical Improvement of [this Rule] would lead us to the true Way to Peace in the Christian Church; would engage us to follow more after that Unity in Affection, which is far more valuable in the Sight of God and Christ, as well as more attainable, than the most exact Uniformity in Opinion, and would never permit us to violate that Charity and Love which is the *End of the Commandment*, in contending about other Things, which, at best, can only have the Place of the Means, and are of no Value in Christianity, further than as they are subservient to the End." What are these Words adduced for? "as if, say they, Charity and Peace could be in the Church without *Unity in the Faith*; and as if there could be a solid and well founded Peace in the Church without Uniformity in the Articles of Faith." Here, if they meant to say any Thing against me, they should, instead of *Unity in the Faith*, and *Uniformity in the Articles of Faith*, have substituted in both Places the most exact *Uniformity in Opinion*; and then it would have been obvious, how much their Quotations from Scripture, and the Harmony of Confessions, were to the Purpose. "Uniformity of Opinion among Ministers, say they, is declared by subscribing Confessions." I have always thought, that no more could be declared by this, than an *Agreement* in the Points determined in the Confession they subscribed; and I am very well satisfied, that 1000 Ministers might, with the utmost Sincerity, subscribe any one Confession in the whole Harmony, and yet the most exact *Uniformity in Opinion* not be found betwixt any two in the whole 1000. It is plain, that the Things I am comparing

paring in the above Passage, are, *Unity in Affection among Christians, and the most exact Uniformity in Opinion*; and, I say, the first is far more valuable in the Sight of God and Christ, and also more attainable, than the last; and, will any Member of this Church maintain the contrary? If not, why is this Passage quoted against me? or what Error can be fixed on me from it? To what Purpose too, are the last Words of that Passage quoted against me? I hope, not to insinuate, that "we are ever to violate that Charity and Love which is the End of the Commandment, in contending about other Things which have only the Place of the Means (a). I thank God, I have never learned any such Doctrine from our *Confession of Faith*, nor imagined my self bound to any such Thing by my Subscription to it.

The *fourth* Article is, "That I am greatly concerned for a more free Education of Children by Parents and other Instructors, than is consistent with the Directories thereof approved by this and other Protestant Churches, and contained in their respective Catechisms; because they contain these particular and peculiar Doctrines which I call their Shibboleth of a Party." For Proof of this the Reverend Brethren refer to *Ref. Sermon*, p. 33. l. 21. But, that my Meaning may be plain and obvious, and the Cloud cast upon it the more effectually dissipated, I must lay the whole Passage before the Reverend

(a) That *Charity and Love* which, throughout the whole doctrinal Part of this Sermon, I have asserted and proved to be the End of the Commandment, includes *universal Benevolence and the Love of Goodness*. See *Serm.* p. 6, &c. and p. 13. "Tis *Charity out of Faith unfeigned*, animated by a firm and effectual Belief of the *great Truths* of Religion and Christianity; — such a Faith as proves its own Sincerity and Strength, by its working by Love." Our having as favourable an Opinion concerning the Characters and Actions of our Neighbours, as Things will bear, is but one Branch of this Charity; and can never include, that we hold that Man for a true Christian, who, either by his Profession, or his Actions, openly declares himself no true Christian; tho' still there will remain other Branches of Charity to be exercised, even towards him, and never to be violated in any of our Dealings with him.

rend Synod. " I speak it with very great Concern ; I
 cannot help being apprehensive, that the Looseness and
 Debauchery so much lamented in many, who are ob-
 served to have had the Benefit of a religious Educa-
 tion, may often be found to proceed in a great measure
 from that very Education itself, as it is managed : For
 I may appeal to attentive Observers, whether that which
 obtains the Name of a religious Education, does not
 often turn out in such a shape as this ? The Care of
 Parents, or Instructors, about the religious Part of E-
 ducation, is almost wholly spent in inculcating upon
 young ones the *Shibboleth* of a Party ; making them ac-
 quainted with, and instilling into them a Regard for
 the particular Doctrines or peculiar Forms of their
 own Sect ; in which there may oft-times be found a
 Mixture of Things absurd or trifling ; which yet are
 inculcated with as great Earnestness, and by the same
 Methods, with the most weighty and important Points ;
 while great pains are taken to inspire in them at the
 same time a strong Aversion to those of another Way
 of thinking, and that by Methods which even a chil-
 dish Capacity may discern to be contrary to Equity and
 Charity." Here, as this is the only Place where I use
 these Words *the Shibboleth of a Party*, it may be obvious
 to the Reverend Synod with what Truth it is asserted,
 " That I call the particular and peculiar Doctrines con-
 tained in the respective Catechisms of the Protestant
 Churches *their Shibboleth of a Party* ;" and also, with
 what Truth the Reverend Brethren (differing a little
 from the Reverend Presbytery) have positively asserted,
 p. 7. l. 20. of their Libel, " That I name Catechisms
 themselves the *Shibboleth of a Party*." I confess I am
 not able to see, what Point of Error, contrary to the Do-
 ctrine of this Church, can be found in any Part of that
 Paragraph of my Sermon now read. It cannot, surely,
 be, that my Words imply, " That among the Professors
 of Religion there are several Sects or Parties ; or, that
 these Parties are distinguished by particular Doctrines,
 or peculiar Forms, *i. e.* Forms, or Modes of Worship ;"
 for, that this is my Meaning, and not any Systems of Do-
 ctrine, may be evident from the Distinction put between
particular Doctrines and *peculiar Forms*, when I speak of
 " making

" making young ones acquainted with — the particular
 " Doctrines or peculiar Forms of a Sect." Nor can it
 be an Error to say, " That among the particular Do-
 "ctrines of Sects, or their peculiar Forms of Worship,
 " there *may* oft-times be found a Mixture of Things ab-
 " surd or trifling." This is a Fact, I dare say, all the
 Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* are sufficiently con-
 vinced of ; and do not need that I should adduce particu-
 lar Instances of it. Nor can it be any doctrinal Error,
 to insinuate, " That these particular Doctrines and pe-
 " cular Forms have sometimes an extravagant Stress
 " laid upon them, and are made invidious Marks of Di-
 " stinction, to mark out People for Hatred or Mischief ;
 " and may then be called *the Shibboleth of a Party.*"
 That it is only in this View that I could give them that
 Name, plainly appears, not only from the natural Force
 of the Allusion to the Use made of the Word *Shibboleth*
Jud. xii. 6. (and I have no Concern to answer for the
 Propriety of the Use of that Word in any Man's Wri-
 tings but my own,) but also, from the whole Strain of
 the following Part of that Head ; in which I explain what
 I mean, by these general Words, " Inculcating upon
 " young ones the *Shibboleth* of a Party ; viz. not only
 " making them acquainted with, and instilling into them
 " a Regard for the particular Doctrines or peculiar Forms
 " of their own Sect, even when there may be found a
 " Mixture of Things absurd or trifling in them ; but also,
 " inculcating these things with as great Earnestness, and
 " by the same Methods, with the most weighty and im-
 " portant Points ; while great pains are taken to inspire
 " in them at the same time a strong Aversion to those of
 " another Way of thinking, &c." Neither can it, cer-
 tainly, be any Error in Doctrine to say, " That often Pa-
 " rents and other Instructors are guilty of such a piece
 " of Mismanagement in the religious Part of the Educa-
 " tion of Children." I don't say *all* Instructors, as my
 Accusers would suggest, to make way for their being
 smart upon me ; nor all Parents neither, blessed be God ;
 but " often the Care of Parents or Instructors, about the
 " religious Part of Education, is *almost wholly* spent in
 " inculcating upon young ones the *Shibboleth* of a Par-
 " ty, &c." If this was a Mistake in me, it could only
 be

be a *Mistake in Fact*; and I should heartily rejoyce to find it so. Nor can it, methinks, be any Error to blame such a Conduct; for, amidst the various and inconsistent Opinions and Forms by which different Protestant Churches are still distinguished, I know of no "*Directories for the Education of Children* approved by any of them," which oblige Parents or other Instructors "to spend their Care almost wholly in inculcating upon young ones the particular Doctrines or peculiar Forms of their own Sect," and to lay such an extravagant Stress upon these as I am blaming; or which approve of such a Conduct; and do not rather lead them to spend *most of their Care* in inculcating upon young ones these most weighty Points in which good Men and serious Christians agree, and using their utmost Endeavours to bring them to such a *Faith* of these as worketh by *Love*. I hope, therefore, it cannot be reckoned a Crime, or to imply any Error, for a Minister of the Gospel to *speak with great Concern* of such gross Mismanagements as I am finding Fault with, in an Affair of such Importance as the Education of Children, and of the Mischiefs occasioned by them: And, when I ascribe "the Looseness and Debauchery so much lamented in many who are observed to have had the Benefit of a religious Education" to such Mismanagements in it, I do not assert it so positively as the Brethren would insinuate; but express my self thus, "I cannot help being apprehensive, that the Looseness, &c. may often be found to proceed in a great measure, &c." This is what "I speak with very great Concern;" neither to banter, nor ridicule, nor make Satires; but to lament, and, in the Spirit of Meekness, give a just and serious Reproof; Neither do I speak of this *Looseness and Debauchery*, as proceeding from one of these Mismanagements I mention; but from all of them together: And *what Way* I was apprehensive that Looseness and Debauchery did in a great measure proceed from them, I have made sufficiently plain at the End of that Part of my Sermon: "When the raw unform'd Youth comes once to discover a Flaw or Weakness in some Things that, it may be, he has been taught to look upon as equally sacred with God and Virtue, Goodness and Honesty; must it not be natural for him, upon such a
" Dis-

" Discovery, with the Concurrence of wild Passions used
 " to no regular Government; to draw very general and
 " hastily Conclusions ? to throw up at once every thing
 " he has been formerly taught ? &c."

Upon the whole; I appeal to *attentive Observers*; (and I hope such shall be found in the *Reverend Synod* as well as among my *Hearers* at *London*) what Foundation there is for any Accusation against me upon this Article; far less for the hideous Outcries made against me; as vilifying the Catechisms of the Protestant Churches: And whether it may not justly be said of the Satire the Reverend Brethren impute to me; *qui capit ille facit*.

The Reverend Brethren, in their Enlargements upon this Article, as if sensible of the want of Argument, begin with these Outcries: " This Passage is such a bold Attack upon the Education of Children in the united Kingdom, on the Managers of it, and the Things taught them, that there is not a Sentence in it but gives great Offence to us, and to many intelligent Christians." And again, " This is a bitter Satire on the common Education in these Nations; and, as an Evidence of it, he appeals to *attentive Observers*; and no doubt such were to be found among his *Hearers*." The Attack might perhaps be a bold one; but it was only on the Practice of those, who show greater Concern about training up young ones to a *Form of Godliness* than to the *Power of it*: Some such I might hope would, by the Blessing of God, be convinced and reformed by it; little expecting, that any of the Character of Ministers of the Gospel would rise up to teach them to storm at the Reproof: Others of that Stamp, who pleased themselves with training up Children in a *Form of Godliness*, instead of exercising a judicious Concern about bringing them to the *Power of it*, I might lay my Account would take Offence at that Passage; but if any *intelligent Christians* take Offence at it, it must be owing to something else, than either their Understanding or their Christianity: And indeed they, who do not altogether want some Measures of good Understanding, and true Christianity too, have these, in this imperfect State, accompanied with an unhappy Mixture of Frailties and Passions, that may lead them to take Offence where they ought not; or may make them a Prey to

to such as can teach them to do it, if they are not sufficiently disposed to it of themselves. But if the indulging of such Frailties, and Passions is to be a Restraint on the Freedom and Boldness of a Minister of the Gospel, in reproving Faults that are gross and of pernicious Consequence, there's an End of his Faithfulness: *If I thus please Men, I am not the Servant of Jesus Christ.* To strengthen their Accusation upon this Head, the Reverend Brethren refer to some Passages in my *Charity Sermon*, which I might content my self with leaving it to the Reverend Synod, upon the bare reading of them, to judge what Error they can be reckoned to contain contrary to the Doctrine of this Church: The first of them is in p. 22. "The Character of Brotherly Love is what our blessed Saviour pitches upon, as the shining and distinguishing Mark by which all Men are to know his Disciples: (For this I quote *John xiii. 35.*) Our Title to the Character of Christians is, by our blessed Saviour, put not upon the Clearness of our *Heads*, but on the Honesty and Sincerity of our *Hearts*; not upon the *Exactness of our speculative Notions* in Matters of Intricacy and Nicety, but on the *Goodness of our Dispositions.*" These Words of this Passage, "not upon the *Exactness of our speculative Notions* in Matters of Intricacy and Nicety," the Reverend Brethren, in quoting it, change into "not upon our Notions in the Matters of Intricacy and Nicety." And as this is the only Place where I use the Words *Matters of Nicety*, let any candid Person judge what Foundation the Reverend Brethren have, for their positively asserting, (p. 7. l. 18. of their Libel) "That I call some Truths which the Youth are taught from their Catechisms *Matters of Nicety.*" It is plain, that in the above Passage I am glossing upon these Words of our blessed Saviour referred to, and, agreeably to them, as I conceive, am speaking of "the *Mark he pitches upon* by which all Men are to know his Disciples;" or of "our Title to the Character of Christians," i. e. what entitles us to be accounted Christians, and *vowed* for such: And I leave it to the Judgment of the Reverend Synod; if I have here delivered any Error; or have not made a true Observation upon the Words of our blessed Lord. Another Passage of that Ser-

mon here referred to is in p. 29. " The main End of the
 " Christian Institution is not, to try our Wit, and exer-
 " cise our Penetration; or (N. B. say the Reverend Bre-
 " thren, and I join with them) " to train us up to be exqui-
 " site and subtle Metaphysicians; but, to purify our
 " Hearts to Love, and to edify the Body of Christ in Love."
 Now, here, N. B. 1st, That this is the only Passage in
 these two Sermons, where I at all use the Words *train*
up to be exquisite Metaphysicians; from which it may be
 obvious to any honest Man, on what Foundation it is as-
 serted by the Reverend Brethren (p. 7. l. 19. of their Libel)
 That " I call the teaching of the Youth some Doctrines
 " which they are taught from their Catechisms, a training
 " of them up to be exquisite Metaphysicians." Do I do so
 here? or, Do I use those Words in any other Place?
 Next, Are the Words of mine above mentioned quoted
 as an Error? then the contrary must be Truth, viz. That
 " the main End of the Christian Institution is not, to pu-
 " rify our Hearts to Love, &c. but to try our Wit, and
 " exercise our Penetration; or, to train us up to be ex-
 " quisite and subtle Metaphysicians." But, say the Re-
 " verend Brethren, " This is the Language of the licen-
 " tious Thinkers of the Age, with respect to the Mysteries
 " of our holy Religion." But, dare they say, and can they
 prove, that it is *my Language with respect to these*? The
 Reverend Brethren go on: " That the Doctor is not
 " friendly to the training of young ones in the Know-
 " ledge of the Articles of Faith; we need only mention
 " his concluding Advice to them," (*Char. Sermon. p. 39.*
 and what is that?) " Read carefully your Bibles; those
 " Parts especially which you can best understand; the *Book*
 " of Proverbs, the Parables of our blessed Saviour, and
 " his excellent Sermon upon the Mount." In quoting
 this Passage the Reverend Brethren leave out the Word *e-*
specially; but, when the Passage is fairly quoted, it is e-
 vident, that I exhort the young ones to *read carefully their*
Bibles, i. e. their whole Bibles; and then these Parts espe-
 cially: But, say the Reverend Brethren, " Will these
 " Parts lead the Youth to a just Understanding of the
 " Principles of Christianity? I hope they will be led to
 that, by the Blessing of God, if they carefully read their
 whole Bibles, and these Parts especially. I may leave it
 now

now to the Reverend Synod to judge, what a wonderful Instance the Reverend Brethren have here given, of my *not being friendly to the training of young ones in the Knowledge of the Articles of Faith*; and also, what Conclusion against me can be drawn from any Omissions in my Sermon.

The *fifth* Article contains no less than a Charge of *Prophaneness*, a Word the Reverend Brethren say *they are determined to use*: But the Reverend Synod know how easy it is, for Men who are so minded, to give the hardest Names to any thing. "He prophanely diminishes, say the Reverend Presbytery, "the due Weight and Influence of Arguments taken from the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, while he alledges, that, "without explaining the Nature and Justice of these "most important, evident and plain Articles of Religion, the same can contribute no more to form the Minds "of the Youth to a Sense of Good and Evil, than Whips "and Sugar-plumbs." The Passage referred to, for Proof of this, is in *p. 34. l. 5. of the Reformation Sermon*, where I mention it, as another great Fault in the Education of Children; when, "instead of forming their Minds "to a rational Sense of Good and Evil, a Taste and Relish for true Piety and Virtue, upon such Principles as "will stand the Test of a most strict Examination; any "Instances of good Practice they are taught are recommended and enforced by mere Authority, or by the "Awe of future Rewards and Punishments; which, as "they are made Use of, without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of them, can contribute no more to "promote a liberal Piety and Virtue, a Relish for true "Goodness, and Savour of Honesty in the Mind, than "Whips and Sugar-plumbs." Here it will be obvious to the Reverend Synod, that the Things which I say, the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, made Use of without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of them, can contribute no more to promote, than Whips and Sugar-plumbs are; "a liberal Piety and Virtue, a Relish "for true Goodness, and Savour of Honesty in the "Mind." By which Words I conceive the Reverend Synod will easily see, that nothing can be intended, but

" a Piety and Virtue, flowing from and influenced by a
 " supreme Love of God, a prevailing Love of Piety and
 " Virtue itself, a strong and commanding Sense of the
 " Beauty of Holiness, of the Amiability and Sweetness
 " of Honesty and Goodness, and a prevailing Delight in
 " them." So far as a Man's Practice of Religion is not
 of this kind, and influenced by such Principles, I frankly
 own I look upon it as a *servile and mercenary Religion* ;
 and can never reckon it that *liberal Piety and Virtue*,
 which I think it should be my great Concern, as a Mini-
 ster of the Gospel, to promote, either in old or young (a).
 Now, I may refer it to the Judgment of the Reverend
 Synod, whether, barely inculcating upon Children, that,
 if they do so and so, the Governor of the World will give
 them everlasting Pleasure in another Life ; and, if they
 do otherwise, he will inflict everlasting Torment upon
 them ; can contribute any more to promote in them *the*
Love of God and Goodness, than the Pain of the Rod with
 which the Parent himself corrects their Faults, or the
 sensual Gratifications with which he rewards their Obe-
 dience ; if, *all the while*, he never joins with these Warn-
 ings any Explication of the amiable and adorable Chara-
 cter of this universal Governor, of the Equity and Good-
 ness

(A) Here it is alledged, " That such a Piety and Virtue is
 " not to be promoted in *Children* ; but is the peculiar Attain-
 " ment of *advanced Christians*." But I hope, a Piety and
 Virtue flowing from the Love of God himself, and not *merely*
 from Fears or Hopes as to Futurity, is, in some measure, the
 Attainment of *every true Christian* : And, without determining
how early a liberal Piety and Virtue may be promoted in Chil-
 dren, might not one justly find fault with confining our selves
 to the Use of any Motives with them in *such a manner* as has
 no direct Tendency to promote it ? And, for my part, I am not
 able to see, why Children are not capable of being taught the
Goodness of God, as soon as they can be taught his very *Being* ;
 or why they may not (by the Blessing of God) be trained up
 to love him, as early as to be afraid of his Judgments : And I
 must own I apprehend it to be of pernicious Consequence, to
 begin sooner with teaching Children to be afraid of God's Judg-
 ments, than with teaching them to love him ; especially, if no
 Care is taken to convince them of the *Righteousness* of these
 Judgments.

ness of his Laws, the Nature of the Rewards he will bestow on those who obey his Commands, and the Justice of these Denunciations which he has made the Sanctions of his Laws? Methinks it might be evident, at first View, to any understanding and considerate Christian, that the true Love of God and Holiness can only be promoted, by a prevailing Sense of the Amiability of God, and the Goodness of his Laws; together with some Knowledge of the Nature, and Conviction of the Justice of the Sanctions of these Laws: And, instead of any Man's being guilty, by such Doctrine as this, of "*prophane diminishing the due Weight and Influence of Arguments,*" taken from the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments," I should think, that they may rather be charged with "*diminishing or concealing the due Weight and Influence of such Arguments,*" who make Use of them, *without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of these Rewards and Punishments*; seeing to me it is evident, that from *this* their chief Weight and most proper Influence is derived. I beg leave to add, upon this Head, that, in declaring the Principle which I still apprehend to be Truth, I made Use of the Expression, *Whips and Sugar-plumbs*; reckoning that, in the Place where I used it, it was a just and *strong* Manner of expressing my Sentiment: I have, in reflecting upon it, long before it was taken notice of by the Reverend Presbytery, been apprehensive it might be reckoned too *familiar* a Phrase for the Gravity of a Sermon; and, if the Reverend Synod is of this Mind, I am very ready to alter it, for any proper Phrase they may be so kind as to suggest to me, which may not be liable to that Exception (a). This Declaration I made before the Meeting of the Reverend Synod in *November* last, in the Hearing of the Reverend Brethren, or most of them; and all the Use I can find they have made of it is, to represent me as "*treating future Rewards and Punishments with Ridicule,*" and to change the

(a) If I was to publish a new Edition of this Sermon, I should chuse to express my Sentiment, without the *Comparison*, thus: "*Which, as they are made use of without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of them, cannot directly contribute to promote a liberal Piety, &c.*"

the Terms of the Reverend Presbytery's Charge, as well as misrepresent my Words, by flatly asserting, (p. 7. l. 16. of their Libel) that I "*file* future Rewards and Punishments *Whips and Sugar-plumbs*;" though I am sure I have heard many a more familiar Phrase from our Pulpits, and from very worthy Men too, without such severe Reflexions cast upon them; and when the good Men were no more in Jest than I was when I used that Phrase.

Upon this Article the Reverend Brethren make strange Work. *First*, They fall of analyzing the whole Paragraph of my Sermon, in which, they say, "I *condescend*" on three Instances of Mismanagement in a religious "Education." By their Leave, there is four of them, distinctly marked and separated by *Colons* (*a*), *1st*, Spending their

(*a*) The *first* regards the Manner of *instructing* Children, and instilling Principles into them; where I find fault with "laying an extravagant Stress on particular Doctrines, or peculiar Forms of Worship, beyond their real and comparative Importance." The *second* regards the Manner of training them to a good *Practice*; where I blame "using mere Authority, or the Awe of Futurity in a defective Manner; instead of forming their Minds to a Taste and Relish for true Piety and Virtue." The *third*, the Manner of accustoming them to the *Offices of Religion*, (which, when rightly gone about, are the great Means of all Goodness;) where I find fault "that due Care is not used to carry their Understandings and Affections along, in going about these Offices; but they are made a *mere Force* upon them:" And forced Prayers, I was always taught in my early Days, are not good for the Soul. The *fourth* regards the Way of managing their *Affections and Passions*; where I blame "the not improving their kind and generous Affections; but humouring their selfish Passions and Appetites." These were Faults which I apprehended I had observed, even in the Conduct of such as I could not justly charge with neglecting to train up their Children in the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, and the Way of Salvation by him, and the Doctrines of the Gospel; whom, therefore, I never thought of charging with it. And it was far from my Intention to *libel* any Person, in taking notice of these Faults; I apprehend, I am not so *particular* as will bear that Construction: But my Design was, to lament these Faults; to reach home a Reproof, where Conscience might speak it just; and, by the Blessing of God,

their Care almost wholly in inculcating upon young ones the Shibboleth of a Party, in which is included what the Reverend Brethren call the *second*, inspiring them with a strong Aversion to those of another Way of thinking, &c. The *second*, which the Reverend Brethren call the *third*, is what we are now upon, regarding the Manner of training them to a *good Practice*: As to which, I blame, *first*, the neglecting to "form their Minds to a rational Sense
" of

God, to reclaim by the Reproof, and the subsequent Expostulations and Directions; in which it is easy to see I was obliged to be short. These *Directions* have been strangely found out to contain my whole System of the Education of Children, and to be a mere System of Natural Religion; though I am sure they are not, nor ever were intended for a *System* of either *that* or *any thing* else. This strange Discovery the Reverend Brethren had made no mention of in their Libel; so that I thought it might be construed impertinent in me to take any notice of it in my Answers: But it was kept, it seems, in reserve for an after Game. It was a Discovery which, when it first cast up, greatly surprised not only my self, but several candid and unbiassed Persons, how it could ever enter into any Man's Head. From this Discovery it is charitably inferred, "That I am not
" for training up young ones in the Knowledge of Christ and
" the Doctrines of the Gospel," because no mention is made of these in those Directions: Though it is plain, the *Directions* are only intended as *Hints* how the *Faults I had been re-*
proving might be amended: Among which I had not charged
" a neglecting to train up Children in the Knowledge of Christ
" and the Doctrines of the Gospel;" as my Design was only to take notice of such Faults in Education as I thought I had observed in those whom I could not justly charge with such a Neglect. If the *Hints* given are not pertinent or proper for amending the *Faults mentioned*, there is a great Defect here; and I know my self too well, not to be sensible of my Liability to such Defects: But if such *Weaknesses* are to be construed into *Crimes*, there will be no End of libelling. What my Sentiments are concerning the Necessity of training up young ones in the Knowledge of Christ and the Doctrines of the Gospel (was my Character in this Church sunk so low, as *that* could be a Question) might be in some measure gathered, by any candid Observer, from several Hints in my *Charity-Sermon*,
p. 34. l. 15. &c. p. 35. l. 21. &c. p. 38. l. 2. &c. p. 39. l. 1.
&c.

“ of Good and Evil, &c.” and then, that, *instead* of this, “ any Instances of good Practice they are taught, are recommended and enforced by *mere Authority*, or by “ the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, which, “ as they are made use of, &c.” As to my blaming the enforcing by *mere Authority*, I do not find that the Reverend Presbytery have past any Censure upon it; nor can I see what Fault the Reverend Brethren mean to find with it, though, in subjoining what they call my Explication of it, they leave out Part of my Words.

As to what I say upon the last Head, nothing could be farther from my Intention, than (what I think my Words do no Way lead to) depreciating the Arguments which the holy Scripture makes use of to work on our Hopes and Fears; or laying aside the Use that is there made of them; tho still I must think, that if we are not actuated in Religion by a Principle of Love, our Religion is but mercenary; if we are mov'd only by Hopes and Fears, unless these are animated by a Sense of the Nature of those future Enjoyments which good Men expect, and wicked Men forgo. It is my obvious Intention in that Passage, to speak not of what may indirectly and occasionally usher in at last “ a liberal Piety and Virtue,” by alarming a Sinner out of his Security, deterring him from vicious Courses, and awakening him to serious Consideration; but of what are the direct Motives to, and Principles of *a liberal Piety and Virtue*. 'Tis in this Sense only that I ever intended to say, that “ the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, made use of in the “ Manner expressed, could contribute no more to promote these, &c.” Neither can I be understood to assert this concerning that *Awe*; if, in using it, there is joined an *Explication* of the Nature and Justice of these Rewards and Punishments; but when it is made use of *without explaining* this; not every Time they are made use of, but without *ever* explaining it. By all which it may appear with what Judgment the Reverend Brethren say, “ This *Qualification* does not help the Matter much; for, “ say they, our Saviour, *Matth. v. 29, 30, and xxv. 46* “ inculcated the Duties of Religion on his Hearers, (I “ suppose they mean *by these Motives*) without explaining “ the Nature and Justice of them.” But supposing he

had done so in the Instances they adduce, does he do it without ever explaining these? "and yet, they add, he "knew how to form their Minds to a true Taste of Virtue, and Relish for Goodness;" and, I beg leave to add, knew how to make use of other Methods for it too: Witness the amiable Discovery he gives us of God; his excellent Instructions concerning the true Nature of unfeigned and unaffected Piety and Virtue; his noble and perfect Example, in which he sets its Beauty so strongly before our Eyes; his tender Expostulations; and the kind Methods by which he proved the merciful Design of his coming into the World. But the Instances the Reverend Brethren adduce, of our Saviour and his Apostles making use of the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments, without explaining the Nature and Justice of them, appear to me pretty strange ones; for admitting that in *Mat. v. 29, 30.* there was no Explication of the Nature or Justice of future Punishments, yet are there not strong and clear Hints of the Nature of future Rewards in the Beginning of that very Discourse? "Blessed are they who "hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be "filled," viz. with that *Righteousness* they hunger and thirst after; and "blessed are the pure in Heart, for they "shall see God:" To see God, and be filled with *Righteousness*, are considerable Explications of the Nature of heavenly Enjoyments. The other Passage in *Matth. xxv. 46.* appears yet more oddly adduced for their Purpose; seeing a great Part of the Scope of that Description of the Procedure of the Day of Judgment, where it occurs, appears plainly to be, to set forth the Equity and Justice of the Procedure of that Day. Nor do the Passages adduced from the Apostle *Paul*, seem a Whit more to their Purpose; the first of them, *Rom. ii. 6.* begins with this Account of the final Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, that, in it, God "will render to every Man according to his Works;" and the other, *2 Thes. i. 6.* begins with these Words, "Seeing it is a righteous Thing with God to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, Rest, &c." I leave it to the Reverend Synod to judge how much their Quotations from the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* are to the Purpose. Nor can I think it so hard a Task for pious

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Parents,

Parents, even of *ordinary Capacities*, to explain to young ones, in some Measure, the Nature and Justice of future Rewards and Punishments; for the holy Scriptures have not left us so destitute of sufficient Hints of that Kind, obvious to every attentive Peruser of them, as some would suggest. And I do not *mean*, as the Reverend Brethren would insinuate, "that Parents should propose and answer (or even know of) all the Difficulties and Objections started by Adversaries" upon that Head; no, I think *explaining* is one Thing, and *answering Difficulties and Objections* another: And, according to the Reasoning of the Reverend Brethren, "the most Part of pious Parents could not be sufficient for the Task" of teaching young ones the very first Principles of Religion; but I am very well satisfied, that a pious Parent, even of ordinary Capacity, provided he faithfully employs the Capacity God has given him, in the Concerns of his own Soul and the Souls of his Children, may attain to himself, and communicate to his Child, satisfying Evidences "that there is a God, who made him and all Things, and who governs them," without being able to consider or examine the monstrous Scheme of *Spinoza*, or the other specious Cavils with which Scepticks and Atheists have endeavoured to perplex the Evidence of this first and clearest Truth of all Religion. "The Doctor, say the Reverend Brethren, proposes to instil into young ones just Notions of Religion from the Nature of Things, and the Relations they have to one another, and from the unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil; but we are afraid that this Method is too philosophical, and that Parents must learn their Metaphysics, and study the abstract Essences of Things, before they can manage such an Education." My Proposal is, "That great Pains be taken to instil into young ones, according as their Capacities gradually open, — just Notions of the Nature of *pure and undefiled Religion*, as 'tis founded in a Sense of the unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil, and the Belief of a perfectly good God, &c." Neither can I reckon this so hard a Task as the Reverend Brethren would bear us in Hand: To reason about the unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil, in such a Manner as is requisite to obviate

obviate and confute the Cavils of Adversaries against it, is one Thing; and to have a *Sense* of this unalterable Difference, and communicate *that Sense* to others, is quite another Thing. The Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil is as *certain*, and almost as *clear*, as that betwixt *Light and Darknes*; with this Difference, that whereas the one strikes the *outward Senses*, the other requires the *Attention of the Mind* to observe it: And I am persuaded, that it is not so much owing to Want of Capacity, as Want of Attention to Things of the greatest Importance, that many discover so little *Sense* of this Matter: And I cannot tell, but if Men had as strong Lusts and Passions to prompt them to oppose the Difference betwixt *Light and Darknes*, as the Difference betwixt *Virtue and Vice*; did their *evil Deeds* lead them as much to *hate the natural*, as the *moral Light*, they might perplex the one by Cavils as specious, and as hard to be distinctly obviated and exposed, as they bring against the other. And yet I am very well satisfied, that as every Man has naturally a *Sense* of the unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil; so attentive Persons of ordinary Capacities, may be able to improve that *Sense* in themselves, and also to excite, strengthen, and improve it in their Children; not by such metaphysical Reasonings as may be needful, to meet with these *Oppositions of Science*, *falsly so called*, with which Scepticks have endeavoured to overcloud the Evidence of this Point, but by plain moral Maxims, obvious Instances, and familiar Representations of Pieces of good or bad Conduct in Life and Manners, To confirm this, I could, were it needful and proper, adduce Instances of plain honest Christian Parents, who never "learn'd their Metaphysics, nor studied the abstract Effences of Things," who yet have, by the Blessing of God, early instilled into their Children a *Sense* of the unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil, chiefly by an attentive and diligent Use of that valuable Part of holy Scripture, and most adapted to this Purpose, the *Book of Proverbs*.

But the Reverend Brethren leave their Reasonings, to fall again to their injurious Accusations. "The Doctor, say they, brands these Arguments, viz. the Arguments taken from the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments,

" with the Names of Fetters and awkward Restraints,
 " *Ref. Sermon. p. 35. l. 6.*" But let any Man read the Words
 of mine referred to, in their Connection with the preced-
 ing Paragraph, and then judge, whether it is not to the
 several awkward Mismanagements in an Education which
 obtains the Name of a religious one, taken all together;
 and not to the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments,
 that I am giving those Names. But this is to introduce
 another of their Quotations, and that to draw them on to
 insinuate, " that I am not friendly to the Doctrine of ever-
 " lasting Punishments;" and why? because, in glossing
 upon the Words of the Apostle, 1 John iv. 8, 16. I say,
 (p. 17 of my *Char. Sermon.*) " The moral Perfections of
 " God may all be summed up in this one View, *the most*
 " *perfect Goodness, regulated in its Exercise by the most*
 " *consummate and unerring Wisdom.*" This, in the Re-
 verend Brethrens Comment, is to represent God as all
 Goodness, without any Wisdom to direct its Exercise at all.
 This Comment of their own the Reverend Brethren may
 well represent, " as making another God than the Scri-
 " ptures speak of, as excluding vindictive Justice in God,
 " and leading to rank Socinianism," or worse, if they
 please: But as I have all along represented the Goodness
 of God, " not as a partial and ungoverned Fondness, but
 " as the extensive Goodness of the universal Governor,
 " and always conducted in the particular Exercises of it
 " by the most consummate Wisdom;" I own the Idea
 of a good and wise Governor, who is not just, and is not
 disposed to punish when the Ends of good and wise Go-
 vernment require it, is to me absolutely unconceivable,
 and an Absurdity almost equal to Transubstantiation itself:
 And how God's punishing Transgressors from a Regard
 to the Good of his Creation, and to the Purposes of his
 good Government, can be put in Opposition to his punish-
 ing for the Glory of his own Perfections, and the Honour
 of his Government; I own I am at a Loss to understand.
 I may leave it to the Judgment of the Reverend Synod,
 upon reading the several Passages in my *Char. Sermon.* here
 referred to by the Reverend Brethren, as they stand in
 their Connection, and comparing them together, whether
 the Idea I give of the moral Character of God, excludes
 " a Regard to his own Honour, to the Dignity of his
 " Laws,

"Laws, and the Authority of his Government;" though I cannot, as the Reverend Brethren seem to do, look upon these as "*narrow and particular* Interests, turning him aside from the Exercise of the most pure and unbounded Goodness;" and even when he *punishes* impenitent Sinners, I think he still acts from a Regard to the *Good of his Creation*, and the Authority of Laws formed for that Purpose.

The Reverend Brethren next bring a Quotation from the *Ref. Serm. p. 23.* "What Terrors must seize his Mind, who is filled with a just Sense of the Displeasure of Heaven? which a wicked Man may well be in Fear of, even from God's Love of Goodness, and of the Welfare of his Creation, tho' there was no express Denunciation of it." I hope there is no Error here, and yet, for this Passage, I must be arraigned, "as proposing another Method than the Prophet *Isaiah* took with wicked Men, and not denouncing Scripture-Woes against Sinners;" though, in the Place where that Passage occurs, it had been quite foreign to the Purpose to do it; because, in that whole Part of my Discourse, my Purpose is to speak of the *natural* Fruits of Vice, the Miseries it would *naturally* produce, tho' there was no divine Revelation denouncing any Wo against Sinners; and so, in the End of that Paragraph, I say, "This is the *natural* Portion of a wicked and vicious Man." I am conscious to my self, that I am as much for a scriptural Way of preaching as any Man, and do sincerely endeavour it in the ordinary Course of my preaching: And yet I cannot but think, that Ministers, who are *set for the Defence of the Gospel*, should, in our Day, and on some Occasions, set about the Defence of "the natural and unalterable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil," that great Foundation of all Morality and Religion, and of the valuable Design of our blessed Saviour's coming into the World; and, in doing this, they cannot with Propriety bring in the Authority of Scripture-Declarations or Denunciations for Proofs, because all the Authority of these depends upon that Point, which is to be proved; though they may pertinently make use of Scripture-Phrases in expressing themselves upon it. The above Passage must also be a Proof, that, in a Passage of the other

ther Sermon, (p. 16.) where I am speaking of the *Sanctions of God's Laws*, I mean only the *internal Sanctions*, tho' it is plain, in that Passage itself, that I there speak of "all the Sanctions with which God has wisely guarded his Laws."

Upon the Whole, I submit it to the Reverend Synod, whether the Reverend Brethren "have made it evident, that I diminish the due Weight and Influence of future Punishments; and, as they pretty oddly express it, confine the Power of God Almighty as to the Transgressors of his Laws."

The *sixth* Article is, "That I exceed in my Charity, both to Heathens, to whom the Gospel-offer has been or may be made, and who reject the same; and to such as were born, baptized and educated in the Church, who afterwards become Deists, and reject the Words of Jesus, and his Institution." The only Passage where I speak concerning those who reject the Words of our Saviour is in p. 28. of the *Charity Sermon*, where I have these Words, "That though I am conscious to my self I am as far as any Man from a Disposition to judge rashly, even of those who reject the Words of our Saviour himself, and am willing to leave them to the Judgment of the Searcher of Hearts, whose *Mercies are great*; yet I must own, I am at a loss to conceive, how a Soul, in which the Love of Goodness, and just Notions of God, had a due Prevalency, could reject (as an enthusiastical, an useless or pernicious Imposture) a Claim to Divine Revelation, in which *the End of the Commandment is Charity, &c.*" Now, I cannot imagine, what Excess of Charity, to those who reject the Words of our Saviour, can be found in this Passage; or what part of it an Excess of Charity can be charged upon: Is it, "That I am far from a Disposition to judge rashly of these Men? or, That I am willing to leave them to the Judgment of the Searcher of Hearts?" or, That I assert, that *his Mercies are great*?

The Reverend Brethren, in the whole Strain of their Reasoning upon this Article, and all the Authorities from Scripture and the *Confession of Faith* which they adduce as against me, proceed upon putting a Construction on my Words

Words which I am sure they cannot bear; and cannot but think it strange, how any Man should be led to put such a Construction upon them; as if, in the Concession above mentioned, I was speaking concerning the future State, or the eternal Salvation of those who reject the Words of our Saviour; whereas I think it may be obvious to any attentive Reader, from the whole Strain, and almost every Word and Sentence of that Paragraph, that it is *only* concerning their present Disposition, in rejecting Christianity, in the Manner and on the Grounds mentioned in the following part of the Paragraph, that I am there speaking; of *that only* the Purpose I was then upon could lead me to speak. The whole comes in, as an Enlargement upon a *Point* which I found *the Time would not allow me to pursue* at any Length, *viz.* "How far the innate Amiability and Goodness of the Christian Institution should *alone* suffice to recommend it to our hearty Reception." Upon *this Point*, therefore, I only say one Thing, and 'tis in short this, "That I am at a loss to reconcile such an Opposition to so good an Institution (as, in the following part of the Paragraph, I shortly describe, and endeavour to show how unreasonable it is) with a due Prevalency of the Love of Goodness, and just Notions of God in the Soul;" and that this Censure, which to some has appeared harsh and severe, might not be thought to proceed from a *Disposition of rash judging*, I offer it in with a Protestation, "That I am conscious to my self I am as far as any Man from a Disposition to judge rashly, even of those who reject the Words of our Saviour himself." With regard to what do I say so? to their eternal State? No; but with regard to that, about which alone I was to pronounce any Judgment; and about which alone it was to the Purpose of the Argument I was then upon to pronounce any Judgment; "the Disposition they seem'd to me to discover, in rejecting Christianity, in such a Manner and on such Grounds." But the Reverend Brethren will have these Words to imply, "That I reckoned it was a rash Judgment, to determine in a Matter so clearly revealed in the Scripture, as that *he that believeth not shall be damned.*" But as these Words are *premised*, to introduce the Judgment I am going to make, in this Manner,

"Though

"*Though I am conscious, &c. yet I must own, &c.*" the only Thing that the premising of them could naturally imply is, that I was apprehensive the Judgment I was going to make might, with some, come under the Imputation of *rash judging*; which, therefore, I intended to prevent. Withal, what do I say in opposition to my being *disposed to judge rashly* of them? The Reverend Brethren say, "I leave them to the Judgment of God." But I desire my own Words may be attended to: "I am willing to leave them to the Judgment of *the Searcher of Hearts*." Why do I chuse, in leaving them to the Judgment of God, to speak of *Him* under that Character; but because the Thing to which I have a View, and about which I am introducing some Judgment of my own, is the *inward Disposition of their Hearts*; as I apprehended it was discovered by their Conduct? Had it been my purpose, to have made any favourable Concession with regard to the *future State* of these Men; I must, in propriety of Speech, have said here, that I was "willing to leave them to the Judgment of the *Great Judge of the World*;" or, "the Judgment of the *Great Day*:" But I say, of *the Searcher of Hearts*; plainly shewing, that it was with regard to the *inward Disposition of their Hearts*, that I meant to say, in the preceeding Sentence, *I was not disposed to judge rashly of them*. But I add, *whose Mercies are great*: And, in my doing so, there is a plain Reference to the Words of David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. *Let us fall into the Hands of the Lord, for his Mercies are great*: a Reference, not left to be ghes'd at, nor liable to the Construction of being found out afterwards to serve a Turn; but directly made at the Foot of the Page, with an Asterisk pointing to it, in the original Edition of the Sermon: And therefore, it might as pertinently be asked, "Did David mean the *uncovered Mercy of God the Arminians speak of*?" or, Did he think the Mercies of God would prevail over the "Truth of his clear Declarations?" As such Questions are asked by the Reverend Brethren at me: I know not why I may not be allowed to mean, with David, "the Mercies of God's Nature, and the *present Exercise* of these;" which is extended to all who still enjoy a Time of his Patience and Forbearance, even those who *reject the Words of our Saviour himself*. But, say the Reverend

verend Brethren, " The Doctor in this Paragraph makes
 " a Concession to Adversaries, which *by no means* ought
 " to be made," viz: where I mention it as one insuffi-
 " cient Ground for rejecting Christianity; " Because Men
 " might *possibly* have become good and happy, without
 " having had this extraordinary Help : " And then, to
 shew the Insufficiency of it, supposing it true, I argue
 thus : " Will we *confine* the *abundant Mercy* of the great
 " Parent of Mankind to the bestowing of *mere Necessa-*
 " *ries* on his Children ; and not allow it to reach even
 " to the bestowing of additional Helps, and providing
 " more abundantly for the Fulness of their Joy and the
 " Security of their Hopes ? " But, why might I not make
 such a Concession, even without believing it to be true ;
 in order to show, that, even allowing it to be true, the
 rejecting of Christianity on that account could not be ju-
 stified ? And, Is not the Way I argue to prove this just ?
 Are not Concessions of this Nature common, with the
 best and most orthodox Writers ; in order to show the
 Absurdity of Adversaries the more clearly and strongly ?
 But, supposing I had laid down, as my own Opinion,
 what I here yield, the Reverend Brethren find themselves
 unable to discover any Error in it, without altering the
 Terms of it, thus : " Men could possibly become hap-
 " py, without having the Help of *supernatural Revelati-*
 " *on* ; " whereas it is plain and obvious, that it is not con-
 cerning *supernatural Revelation* in general, that I am
 speaking any thing in this whole Paragraph ; or that the
 whole Strain of the preceeding part of my Discourse led
 me to speak ; but concerning the *Christian Revelation*, as
 we now have it ; contained not only in the Books of the
Old, but chiefly in those of the *New Testament* : And if,
 concerning *this*, I had not only *yielded*, for Argument's
 sake, but *asserted*, as a Truth, " That Men might possi-
 " bly have become good and happy without having had
 " *this extraordinary Help* ; " I suppose I should have had
 others to *fall in with* than the *Pelagians* and *Arminians*,
 even all who believe, " That ABRAHAM, the Friend
 " of God, and Father of the faithful, became good and
 " happy : " And in representing God as, in *this Plan* of
 Revelation, " bestowing beyond *mere Necessaries* on his
 " Children, even additional Helps ; and providing more
 " abun-

" abundantly for the Fulness of their Joy, and the Security of their Hopes ;" I apprehend I should go no further than our blessed Saviour and his Apostles lead me, *Matth. xiii. 17. Heb. xi. 39, 40.*

The *last* Article of the Reverend Presbytery's Charge is, " That I *seem* to oppose the orthodox Doctrine, concerning the sinful and corrupt State of all Men from their Birth ; and assert, that good Example and Instructions may take the Start, not only of vicious Habits, but even of vicious Inclinations, in several Children." The Words of mine referred to for Proof of this are in *p. 32. of the Charity Sermon*, where I am hinting some Advantages of an early Application to *form the Minds* of Children, " while the natural Sense of Goodness is yet in a great measure undebauched, and good Instructions and Examples may *in some measure* take the Start of vicious Habits and Inclinations." I must own, I cannot understand how these Words should have so much as a *seeming* Opposition to the orthodox Doctrine mentioned, to any Person who reads them without Prejudice ; seeing I know of no orthodox Doctrine, concerning the sinful and corrupt, &c. that goes the Length of asserting, That " the natural Sense of Goodness is not yet in a great measure undebauched in Children, and that good Instructions and Examples can *in no measure* take the Start of vicious Habits and Inclinations." 'Tis the last Part of my Words which the Reverend Presbytery appear particularly to have had in View ; and I must observe, that, in relating what I assert, they have omitted the Words *in some measure*, the inserting of which, I conceive, would have spoilt the Use they make of what they call my Assertion ; and, instead of them, have inserted other Words, which tend to give a further Misrepresentation of it ; as if I had expressed my self thus : " That good Instructions and Examples may take the Start, *not only* of vicious Habits, *but even* of vicious Inclinations, in several Children ;" whereas it will be obvious to the Reverend Synod, that the Words *not only* and *but even* are not my Words, but the Reverend Presbytery's : And when I speak of " taking the Start of vicious *Habits and Inclinations*," I conceive it is natural to understand me as speak-

speaking of these *particular Inclinations* to some Vices rather than to others, which commonly follow upon, and are the Fruit of contracted *vicious Habits*; whereas the *Confession of Faith*, in the Passage adduced as against me, plainly speaks of the *habitual Inclination to all Evil*: Nor do I say, that "good Instructions may in a great measure" take the Start, even of these particular Inclinations," as the Reverend Brethren express it, in their Enlargement on this Article; but in *some measure*: Indeed, in the former part of the Passage, I say, "The natural Sense of Goodness is yet in a great measure undebaunched in Children:" But sure the *natural Sense* of Goodness is one thing, and a *natural Inclination* to Goodness is quite another thing: Is there not a *natural Sense of Goodness*, or, of the Difference betwixt Good and Evil, even in the most abandoned Profligates? and yet, May not even this *Sense of Goodness* itself be in a great measure debauched, and the *Conscience seared*, by *vicious Habits*? Before such Habits take Place, then, and have this unhappy Influence, is it not yet in a great measure undebaunched? This Defence, upon this *last Article*, for Substance, I made before the Meeting of the Reverend Synod in *November* last; and one of the Reverend Brethren did me the Justice, both then and at the last Meeting of the Synod, to declare himself satisfied with it; if others were not, it had been a Piece of Candour becoming their Character to have declared their remaining Scruples, that it might have appeared whether I had any thing to offer for removing them (a).

But I humbly conceive it is not so properly my Business at present to remove Scruples or Suspensions, (*that may not be so easy a Task*) as to make a just Defence against an injurious Accusation, as I cannot help reckoning it: If I have done this, I must be allowed to hope, that the Reverend Synod will have the Justice to acquit me; without being hindered from doing me this Piece of Justice, by a Regard to any Suspensions concerning me. I presume, if any Person, who entertained the harshest Sus-

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pensions

(a) The Reverend Brethren have now done me the Justice, to declare themselves satisfied with my Defences upon this Article.

pitions concerning any other Minister of this Church was to turn these Suspicions into a direct Charge or Libel of Errors or Crimes against him; if the Minister cleared himself, or his Accuser failed of making good his Charge; the Judicatories of this Church might reckon themselves obliged, in Justice to his Character, and Support of his Usefulness, to do more than acquit him from the injurious Charge; or, would certainly reckon it the *least* they could in Justice do, to acquit him, even without Leave, either asked or given, of his Accuser.

I have now given a full Answer to every part of the Charge brought against me before this Reverend Synod; and if I have cleared my self of that Charge, to the Conviction of the Reverend Synod, I hope they will now think it high Time that I should be acquitted of it; and will suffer no Considerations to hinder them from doing me this Piece of Justice.

I hope too, that the Reverend Synod will remember, that when I had insisted upon it, as my unquestionable Privilege, to be allowed to risk my Cause on whatever Manner of Defence I should make Choice of, and had choosed to risk it on a verbal Defence at *their Bar*, I was prevailed upon to yield to give in Answers to the Charge in *Writing*, and, in so doing, did, in a particular Manner, cast my self upon the Protection of the Judicatories of this Church, against any Treatment of this Paper that would be unfair or partial.

I shall not take up the Reverend Synod's Time with Reflections upon the Treatment I have met with from the Reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, in relation to this Affair, some Parts of which have already fallen under the Notice of superior Judicatories; but I hope the Reverend Synod will look with a candid Eye upon any Thing that may have escaped me under the Weight of so grievous Treatment. And as I flatter my self the Reverend Synod will find, that I have abstained from all Bitterness towards those who have so grievously injured me; so I am conscious to my self, that I am careful to suppress all inward Resentment against them: And I sincerely bow my Knees to the Father of Mercies, and God of all Grace, on their Behalf; earnestly praying, that he would grant them Repentance and Forgiveness for their
most

most injurious Treatment of me, and would plant in them a Disposition more worthy of Christians and Ministers of the Gospel, than they seem to have been in when they could suffer themselves to be guilty of it. I believe I might appeal to any candid and impartial Person, whether the Usage given me in the Paper I have now been answering, (not to mention other Things that have been openly published to the World) looks like the Conduct of Men who "are unwillingly drawn to charge me with Error, and would rejoyce to see me clear and vindicate my self." I apprehend, the disinterested Part of the World will expect other Proofs of this before they will judge, "that every Man must be a bad Man himself who entertains any Doubt of it." Such Proofs the Reverend Brethren have now a fair Opportunity of giving, if they think fit. I have given a full, and, I think, a fair Answer to every Part of their Charge, and cleared every Passage of my Sermons, against which they have, in their Paper, made any Objection: In doing this, I have found it necessary to lay open several Instances of their Treatment of me in that Paper; and this I have done, without making any harsh Reflections upon them, where, I believe, By-standers will be sensible there was not wanting Occasion for them, had I been disposed to take it.

The Reverend Synod may easily be sensible, how heavy and grievous such Treatment as I have met with, must be to me. I am conscious to my self I have not deserved it, and therefore could not have expected it at the Hands of any Ministers, or any Presbytery of the Church of *Scotland*: Least of all could I have expected it of the Reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh*; the Presbytery in whose Bounds I was born and educated, and lived almost constantly, and with an intire Character, for more than thirty Years; the Presbytery by which I was licensed to preach the Gospel, after they had taken the usual Trials of my Orthodoxy and other Qualifications for that Work, according to the Rules and Directions of this Church; the Presbytery in whose Bounds I preached mostly for several Years, and, particularly, for three Years stately, in an Audience of this City of *Edinburgh*, and from whom (after having, in the Course of that Time, preached against ALL PERSECUTION

FOR

FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE, as plainly, and in as strong Terms, as any used in *these* two Sermons, as several living Witnesses can attest) I received the most ample Testimonials of my Orthodoxy, and other Qualifications for the holy Ministry, when I went to settle at *Glasgow*.

May it therefore please the Reverend Synod, to take the Premises into their serious Consideration; and to repeal the unjust Sentence passed against me by the Reverend Presbytery of Edinburgh, and acquit me from the Charge of Error; and restore my Character, which, till of late, has remained untainted; so as they may, in a Manner becoming such a Reverend Judiciary of this Church, lend a helping Hand to my future Usefulness, and give some proper Check and Discouragement to such vexatious and injurious Prosecutions and Condemnations: According to Justice and the Rules of the Gospel.

W. W.



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